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LIFE OF LORD KITCHENER

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General Lord Kitchener Commander-in Chief in India. and his Staff

LIFE OF LORD KITCHENER

BY

SIR GEORGE ARTHUR

IN THREE VOLUMES

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General Lord Kitchener, Commander-in-Chief in India, and his Staff. From a Photograph by Bourne & Shepherd. (From right to left, Lord Kitchener; Captain Basset, Rifle Brigade; Major-General Birdwood; Captain FitzGerald, 18th Bengal Lancers; Captain Nigel L. Learmonth, 15th Hussars; Lieutenant Wylly, V.C., The Guides) . . . . . *Frontispiece*

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CHAPTER XLII

KITCHENER, on taking over the command in December 1900, could approximately estimate the number of Boers actually fighting at 20,000. The precise figure could not be ascertained at the time, but at the end of the war it became known that, though the greatest number ever mobilised at one time was not more than 25,000, the total then at the disposal of the Boer Commanders, all armed and most of them mounted, was close upon 60,000. Against these the British were able to range a force that, on paper, was overwhelming. The appeal made for reinforcements in December 1900 was followed in the first four months of 1901 by a steady stream of troops flowing into South Africa, strengthened by local levies.

In May 1901 the new Mounted Army was complete. It included 14,000 Cavalry, about 12,000 Mounted Infantry, 7500 South African Constabulary, and a second contingent of Imperial Yeomanry 17,000 strong. Besides these, there were 5000 fresh Australasian troops and 24,000 irregular troops raised locally, and also some Militia. The total strength of the Mounted Force—more than half of them from overseas—was about 80,000 officers and men, who in riding and marksmanship, as well as in the tactics which the nature of the country imposed,

had something to learn from the enemy. In addition to the Mounted Riflemen there were in South Africa about 85,000 Regular Infantry, 20,000 Militia, 13,000 Gunners, 4000 Engineers, and 11,500 of the Auxiliary Corps, bringing the grand total nearly to 240,000, with 100 heavy guns, 420 horse and field-guns, and 60 "pom-poms." But these figures were nominal only; the net fighting strength, which fluctuated a good deal, stood on June 19, 1901, at under 164,000 men, of whom, however, nearly 100,000 were scattered along the lines of rail, and were almost wholly upon the defensive. Thousands were employed on detached duties, such as escorts and guards, as well as at the coast towns and depots. Wastage from casualties and sickness, as well as from the straggling caused by long and rapid marches, was a constant drain upon man-power.

The question of the future leadership of the various columns was an anxious one. Ian Hamilton had gone home with Roberts; Lyttelton [1] was to have leave in view of future command; Blood had not arrived from India; French, Methuen, Bruce Hamilton, Rawlinson, Clements, Rundle, Plumer, Byng,[2] Broadwood, were still in the field and at the top of their form. But some of the senior regimental officers, on whom independent command might devolve, were a little stale,[3] prone to over-caution, and probably unequal to the pace likely to be set. On the other hand, many of the younger leaders who

1 Later Lieut.-General Sir N. Lyttelton.

2 Lieut.-General Sir Bindon Blood; Sir Leslie Rundle; Major-General Plumer; General Sir Henry Rawlinson; Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. Sir Julian Byng. The three last were raised to the peerage in 1919.

3 "Kitchener is almost the only G.O. in whom some staleness is not apparent." (Letter from a Regimental Officer at the end of 1900.)

later distinguished themselves had yet to be discovered.[1]

The Artillery and Infantry were still in full vigour; but under the new conditions the functions of the former were largely in abeyance, while the latter had become, in a sense, ancillary to the insufficient Cavalry. And even if horsemen had sufficed, horses were lacking, although the country was swept for remounts.[2]

The wastage in horses had been large—larger indeed than it need have been; and shortly before the outgoing Commander-in-Chief left for England orders were given to the Remount Department to suspend further purchases, with the unhappy consequence that his successor's earlier requisitions for horses and mules could only be met with a blank *non possumus*.

Nor was the Mounted Branch quite happily equipped or well adapted for its functions. The Regular Cavalry had not yet been armed with the long-range magazine rifle, and were thus on uneven terms with an enemy whose marksmanship with a Mauser was almost faultless. The Mounted Infantry, drawn from infantry regiments, with a sprinkling of Colonial Irregulars and Yeomanry, were, if a makeshift, a most valuable adjunct to the regular horsemen, their infantry training giving them a considerable start both in proficiency with the rifle and in ground skirmishing. But in point of strength they

1 "I hope you will remove some incompetent C.O.'s. I could then use regiments that are comparatively fresh, but have now to be kept on garrison duty, owing to the impossibility of trusting their C.O.'s in the field." (Kitchener to Roberts, 14.12.00.)

2 "I recently raided the racing stables at Johannesburg in order to fit out our mobile columns with the best horses. The result has been that they have caught up Boers galloping." (Kitchener to Roberts.)

were strictly limited. Reserves were not available, and commanding officers of infantry regiments were naturally shy of parting with their best men. The position of the Yeomanry and Colonials was even worse. Not only had they no reserves, but for the most part they were nearly time-expired.

Kitchener persistently pleaded for fresh and further mounted troops, to which he pinned his faith. Almost his first telegram was a prayer for Yeomanry drafts to replenish the very weak battalions. He then reminded Mr. Brodrick that many of the Yeomen—whom he commended as a most useful body of men—had important business at home, and could not be held to indefinitely prolonged engagements, and he suggested that their cup might be sweetened by raising their pay to the level of Colonial rates.

In December Colonel Alderson was put in command of the Mounted Infantry, with a depot and training base at Pretoria, and all infantry regiments were asked to send him every man they could spare. The answer was immediate and generous, though most of the new troops could not be ready before April.

Roberts, on his arrival in England, had spoken no fair words to the Cabinet,[1] and under his earnest advice two cavalry regiments and 1000 trained mounted infantry were promptly shipped to South Africa, arrangements being also made to despatch 3000 more mounted infantry during the ensuing two months. Finally it was decided to raise a new force

1 "Almost the first thing I did was to submit a memorandum pointing out the necessity of sending you more mounted troops. This was accepted by the Cabinet; indeed I feel sure they will let me send as many as can be collected." (Roberts to Kitchener, 18.1.01.)

of Yeomanry; by the end of March [1] 1901 a total of 506 officers and 16,431 men had been enrolled, and, as soon as ready, were sent to the theatre of war, there to be equipped and trained. But efficiency had often to yield to emergency, and captures of "green" Yeomanry, with a valuable haul of rifles and ammunition, were not rare occurrences. Somehow the War Office did not take the lesson to heart, or was unwilling to institute a cut-and-dried programme of reinforcements, and so late as the end of 1901 a brand new force of Yeomanry had to be raised and sent over sea.

The twin military measures which Kitchener instituted for the confusion of the enemy are remembered as "the Blockhouse" and "the Drive." The structurally weak point in the blockhouses was vulnerability to shell-fire. But even before they began to take shape in January 1901 there was little need to reckon with, and no cause to fear, the Boer artillery. The blockhouses were intended in the first instance to defend the railways against Boer raids—of late increasingly audacious and mischievous—and incidentally to release some of the vast number of men ineffectively employed in patrolling the lines. A few of the earlier specimens were substantial stone forts; the majority were loop-holed structures made of two skins of corrugated iron nailed on to wooden frames, and filled in with gravel and earth. The design was modified by successive alterations making for simplicity and cheapness; the iron skins were brought nearer together, so that both could be nailed

1 In January Roberts had written: "The Yeomanry are coming on well. I hope we shall be able to despatch the first lot ere long. I am forwarding them in companies, instead of sending them out as drafts."

to a single wooden frame; the filling was less bulky but of hard shingle, and the octagonal form was abandoned for a cylindrical one.

As defensive works the blockhouses were of first-rate value, and combined admirably with the armoured patrol trains in protecting the railway. Such protection had become imperative; wrecking trains, destroying bridges, and damaging lines had been for many months a highly favoured method of Boer warfare. But in December 1900 the ever-swelling audacity of the burghers reached its high-water mark. This brought about an important enlargement of the protective plan. The well-guarded and fortified railway lines were themselves to be utilised as barriers against the Boer commandos—an extension of purpose which reacted on the blockhouse system. Originally few in number and planted only at vulnerable points, the blockhouses were multiplied liberally and placed at regular intervals—first of one and a half miles, and ultimately of 400 yards, and even in certain cases of 200 yards—along the entire line of railway. The barrier was strengthened by a continuous fence of barbed wire, with entanglements round each blockhouse; and telephonic communication was laid throughout. Kitchener was at first fairly well pleased:

> By fortifying and increasing our posts on the railway lines, they form barriers which the Boers cannot cross without being engaged. I am getting blockhouses at every 2500 yards, and at night parties from each meet and sleep out between, waiting for any attempt to cross. This has proved successful.

The expedient was not to be confined to the railway

but was to reinforce other protective arrangements. Six months earlier a line of small posts had been established on the Bloemfontein—Thaba 'Nchu—Ladybrand road; but the entrenched posts were far apart and their garrisons numbered forty or fifty. As a protection to the line of communication the posts had their value, but as a cordon for barring the passage of Boers they were void of effect. Kitchener, for all that, would not abandon the cordon system, but rather decided to extend it from Bloemfontein westwards—only in a greatly improved shape, more elaborate in plan and wider in scope.

His first care was to fence in a protected area round each of the capitals, so as to secure their civil life. As a police measure this work was entrusted to the South African Constabulary. Bloemfontein was at once secured by an impenetrable screen of posts defended by Boer farmers who had surrendered to the British Government, and enclosing an area of 25-mile radius. The line of police posts sometimes served, not merely as a defence against attacks and a barrier to Boer movements, but as a base for offensive operations to clear the country.

In July Kitchener explains to Brodrick that "there is no doubt these flying columns, on extended operations in this vast country, only in great measure beat the air, as the mobile Boers clear off the moment they hear of the column being sometimes 20 miles away. My project has been, with a number of troops economised off the lines, to divide the country up into paddocks by lines of blockhouses, and so restrict the area in which the Boers could operate."

A month later he was able to pronounce a definite verdict on the merits of the new system:

The lines of blockhouses have been successful. The district west of this—as far as the line of blockhouses which extend from the railway along the Mooi River north to Naauwpoort, and thence to Breeds Nek, and along the Magaliesberg to Commando Nek—is now quite clear; the proof is that the few Boers who have got through our lines into the area enclosed have been obliged to come in and surrender, or are at once caught.

I should like to extend this system by running a line of posts from Potchefstroom to Vredefort Road Station, and thus clear the Losberg area, which is always infested by small parties. Two battalions would be necessary for this, but I am not quite sure where I can find them.

We are now doing all we can to prevent Kritzinger and Malan and a party of Transvaalers under Smuts, the late Attorney-General, from getting back into Cape Colony. Our blockhouse lines are almost complete, and I have moved down a considerable number of troops to guard the frontier. I hope we shall frustrate them and drive them north again. The area between the Orange River and the Ladybrand—Modder River line has been so thoroughly cleared of supplies that I doubt the enemy's being able to exist there for any length of time. (Kitchener to Brodrick, 23.8.01.)

Four months later Ian Hamilton, on returning to South Africa, telegraphed to Lord Roberts:

Although I had read much of blockhouses, I never could have imagined such a gigantic system of fortifications, barriers, traps, and garrisons as actually exists. This forms the principal characteristic of the present operations, supplying them with a solid backbone and involving permanent loss of territory to the enemy, which former operations did not.

Drives, though embodying no new principle, were a novelty in modern tactics. They suggested themselves as a natural expedient for dealing with an

enemy few in number but almost superhumanly alert and scattered over a vast stretch of country. Our scheme was not so much to catch and crush in detail an agile and ubiquitous adversary, as to denude the entire country of all combatant Boers, herding them more and more closely towards an enclosure formed either by natural features or by artificial barriers—corralling and rounding them up into an angle or pocket—forcing them, as it were, through a closed funnel into its blind end.

Kitchener perceived that some such thorough and exact measure, which might be slow but would be sure, was necessary for anything like finality. The more the Boer forces were disintegrated the more must his own be consolidated. To fight scattered commandos with scattered columns would have been a tactical error. Granted that to sweep up a huge expanse of territory with long and continuous lines of troops might seem a primitive and prodigal device; yet it presented fewer difficulties than the alternative course which had been tried and found wanting. The principle of the drive was believed to be sound; for its successful application a compound of skill and luck was required.

The first of the drives, which served afterwards as a rough model, was put through by French in the Eastern Transvaal in February 1901. His general idea was to push forward his centre as the apex of a wedge, then gradually to extend his wings till the whole force was aligned, and with a sweep eastwards to compress the Boer commandos towards and against the Zululand frontier. French had all the skill but lacked the luck. Ian Hamilton had both when in the Western Transvaal he carried out the

last drive of the war, and scored so heavily as to turn the scale in favour of peace. The drives vindicated themselves in time, though only after patient perseverance against initial failure. It had been easy to gibe at the numerous instances in which the Boers laughed at locksmiths, but experience was witness that, for a rather leisurely force pitted against a very lively foe, the Drive-*cum*-Blockhouse expedient was a military happy thought.

CHAPTER XLIII

To make these methods of fighting even workable, it was necessary to blend them with some administrative measures of a drastic character.

The prime necessity of striking at enemy sources of supply was the clear justification—as it was the compelling motive—of our treatment of the civil population. British public opinion has always been sensitive as to the rights of non-combatants. Kitchener shared the sentiment, but had to reconcile it with the dire requirements of war. The question was acute; the farmstead and its belongings had become the Boer base of supply, and every farm was both an intelligence agency and a stores department. Already in September Roberts had adopted in principle the policy of destroying the Boer resources; it fell to Kitchener to carry this out on a large scale by depopulating the country and stripping it. Thousands of flocks and herds were appropriated, huge loads of grain seized or destroyed, standing crops burnt, mills and farm-buildings gutted. The farms, however, being inhabited by women and children, humanity dictated the wholesale removal of families to a place of safety where they could be fed, sheltered, and cared for at our expense. There was an additional reason for this precaution. "The

women question," Kitchener noted in his first letter to Roberts, "is always cropping up, and is most difficult; there is no doubt the women are keeping up the war, and are far more bitter than the men."[1] Camps were established for the Boer families and were located near the railway to facilitate their proper supply and supervision. A distinction was drawn between the merely destitute women, who were to be fed and looked after, and the actively hostile women, who had to be removed for inciting the men to continue the war; and orders were given that the two classes should be kept apart. In May 1901 the number of those roped in was 77,000 white people and 21,000 coloured—the figures rising in October to 118,000 and 43,000 respectively.

So far from proving efficacious in coercing the Boers into submission, the plan was something more than a failure, for it acted as an encouragement to them to fight on. The burghers chuckled at being relieved of the trouble of maintaining their families —the more so as the embarrassing charge was transferred to us.

Unhappily, too, the sickness and mortality in the Concentration Camps soon afforded good cause for uneasiness. The unhealthiness of the Camps was attributed—for the most part unjustly—to neglect of sanitation, the fact being that the inmates were not very refined in their habits and refused medical advice, so that they fell an easy prey to the visitation of measles and pneumonia which at this time spread all over the Boer territories. No remedial measure

1 This was more generally true of the women of the Free State than of those of the Transvaal. Milner, writing to Kitchener (3.10.01), cites one of the latter as having said to him that they knew better than the men can "the state of affairs all round, and see that it is no use going on."

was neglected, and it is beyond doubt that a far greater amount of misery and a far higher rate of mortality would have been the lot of these unfortunates if they had been left unprotected and unprovided for on the veldt. In England, while the earlier condition of the interned people attracted much legitimate sympathy, the woeful tales of the Concentration Camps, enriched with much imaginative detail, afforded delectable material for sensation-mongers and were fully exploited in anti-British propaganda.

Brodrick, when telling Kitchener that even some of the Ministerialist Members of Parliament were "hot on the humanitarian tack," added: "It is a mystery to me how, with so many people on a single line, and with your own troops to feed, you have managed to cope with the difficulty as you have."

Botha asked that greater care might be taken in bringing in the women. "I told him," Kitchener informed Roberts, "I had issued special instructions that, when sufficient transport was not available, they were to be left on their farms until transport could be provided. He made no complaint about burning farms" (28.2.01).

Eventually a Commission of ladies [1] was appointed by the War Office to investigate the facts. After a four months' tour they made a number of useful criticisms and suggestions, they reported that some of the causes of the high death-rate were unavoidable, and warmly praised the efforts made by a scanty staff of overworked officials to cope with an impossible task.

1 A lady named Hobhouse, whose zeal outran her sense of propriety, was forbidden to land at Cape Town. "I see," wrote Kitchener to Mr. Ralli, "Miss Hobhouse has taken action against me, and I shall probably be put in prison on my arrival in England."

As a result of reforms and remedial measures the death-rate was steadily lessened, and early in 1902 had fallen nearly to vanishing point.

Kitchener wrote to Lady Cranborne:

What a hard time Brodrick has had in Parliament with these refugee camps. I wish you would come out and see them; the inmates are far better looked after in every way than they are in their homes, or than the British refugees are, for whom no one now seems to care. The doctors' reports of the dirt and filth in which the Boer ladies from the wilds revel are very unpleasant reading, and I am considering whether some of the worst cases should not be tried for manslaughter. (2.8.01.)

The best and truest witness to what was done was that borne by Botha himself: "We are only too glad to know that our women and children are under British protection."

The early days of Kitchener's command were harassed by an outbreak of activities of which De Wet, Beyers, and De la Rey were the chief promoters, and on December 19 he had to mention his first reverse:

Yesterday I had bad news from Clements. He was attacked at dawn by De la Rey [1]—reinforced by Beyers with the Waterberg commando—making up a total of 2500 men, with 4 to 8 guns. Broadwood was on the north side of the Magaliesberg looking out for Beyers's commando, but he let them slip by. (Kitchener to Roberts, 19.12.00.)

On December 28 Kitchener, anxious that Roberts should have the latest report before embarking, sent a message from Pretoria:

1 Ten days earlier De la Rey had grabbed a fairly large convoy near Rustenburg.

I have put off writing to the last moment in the hopes of receiving good news from the Colony. The operations there drag on, and it seems as if our troops cannot catch the very mobile party of Boers now out there. I greatly fear De Wet will give us the slip and dash south. I went down to Naauwpoort and De Aar and arranged all I could. I had to hurry back, as my absence might have given cause for exaggerated reports here of how affairs were going in Cape Colony. Very few people knew I had been away.

A week later:

A most astounding blow came on us last Sunday when we heard that Viljoen's men had surprised and rushed Helvetia at 2.30 A.M. on Saturday, and captured the 4.7 gun without a shot being fired. The sentries must have been all fast asleep, and as there have been many cases lately of men sleeping at their posts I issued a warning that I will confirm death-sentences in such cases.

The attack on Vrieheid is of precisely similar nature, though there, fortunately, it was driven off.

I had reiterated the orders for barbed wire entanglements everywhere, particularly round positions of guns; there seems to be contradictory evidence about a wire entanglement at Helvetia, but this shall be cleared up.

Cape Colony continues to be unsatisfactory. I have sent down Douglas Haig[1] with local rank of Colonel to see what can be done and take charge of the field. Though our efforts have not been decisively successful, we have prevented the raiders from doing any harm. These have been cleared everywhere, and have not obtained recruits or support in the Colony.

Milner has been quite calm, and I have had to wake up Chowder with some rather strong telegrams. Of course, having 4000 mounted men in the Colony hampers my action considerably both in the Orange River and here; at the same

1 Later Field-Marshal Earl Haig.

time I am acting as vigorously as possible against the enemy everywhere, and am trying, by working up Peace Committees and giving good terms, to induce burghers to leave the commandos and surrender. If only the Cape Colony disturbance would end I could do more. Louis Botha is somewhere near Bethel, and there are reports that he talks of peace, but I do not put much credit in it.

In December De Wet, by diverting to himself the attention of the British columns, had enabled Kritzinger and Hertzog to cross the Orange River. The former moved towards the middle districts of Cape Colony; the latter made for the west, and, hunted for 400 miles, succeeded in reaching Lambart's Bay on the Atlantic coast, where he hoped to find a ship bearing munitions and European mercenaries. To many of his men this was their first sight of the sea; to all of them it was a novel experience, for they were immediately shelled by a British cruiser lying at anchor. Meanwhile Kritzinger, heading south, had reached Willowmore, almost within sight of the Indian Ocean; and the two adventurers, having in the course of their sprint to the sea escaped punishment, returned to the south of the Orange River to await orders.

The Boer Governments for the moment were satiated with fighting in the Republics, and resolved to make their next *démarche* in Natal and Cape Colony —Botha to move on Pietermaritzburg from the Transvaal, and De Wet to pick up Hertzog and Kritzinger and advance boldly on Cape Town. On January 25 De Wet and Steyn assembled over 2000 men at the Dornberg and, eluding Knox and Hamilton, made for the Orange River.

Kitchener wrote to Roberts:

De Wet has got through our Thaba 'Nchu line at night without damage. I still hope to head him by training Knox and Hamilton's men to Bethulie. French's move to sweep up the high veldt is going on well. The Boers are flying in front of him and centring about Ermelo. If we could only catch De Wet about the time we get to Ermelo I believe it might finish the war.

I am sending Lyttelton to Naauwpoort to direct operations there with Chowder. I am glad to say that at last the Colony is showing a little more energy; I have been impressing the necessity of preparation for De Wet's invasion for a long time without much effect; now they are waking up, but I fear too late to do all that should have been done.

I have seen your speech on landing; it was very kind of you to use such terms about me, and I can assure you it gave me the keenest pleasure to know that you are satisfied with what I did in the campaign. (1.2.01.)

To catch De Wet, who crossed into the Colony on February 10 by Zand Rift, troops were hurried from the Transvaal, Kimberley, and Cape Town, Kitchener himself going to De Aar to direct the hunt. Mainly through the energy of Plumer, De Wet, who soon saw he could play no pranks in the Colony, was headed back. His disappointed burghers had to turn and twist in every direction to shake off their pursuers and follow their leader who, re-crossing the Orange at Botha's Drift on February 28, succeeded by the skin of his teeth in regaining his own country and reached the Dornberg just six weeks after he had left it.

CHAPTER XLIV

In a proclamation of December 20, 1900, Kitchener promised that all burghers who surrendered should be allowed to live with their families in Government laagers, and to return to their homes as soon as the guerilla warfare was at an end, their stock and other property being meanwhile respected. A meeting of surrendered Boers was at once held at Pretoria, Kitchener addressing them in a candid but kindly speech, which was afterwards translated into Dutch and circulated with copies of the proclamation among the various commandos. But the burghers were not to be wooed; they regarded the emissaries, not only as cowardly shirkers, but as traitors to their country; and those who did not show a clean pair of heels were treated to fines, imprisonment, and flogging, and in at least one case to summary execution. The failure of the proclamation was discouraging, but not without its object-lesson; Kitchener turned himself wholly to military considerations and awaited overtures from his opponents. These within a couple of months took form in a peace tentative from Botha [1] himself, to which the British General was ready to respond.

Mrs. Botha [he told Brodrick] has just brought in a letter from her husband [2] stating that he desires to meet me with

1 He had caused a verbal intimation to be conveyed to Botha that he was willing to meet him on the understanding that the question of Boer independence must be ruled out of discussion.

2 To Roberts he wrote: "Mrs. L. Botha has just come in with a letter from her husband to say he wishes to meet me. It may mean a great deal,

a view to bringing the war to an end. I think a personal meeting may end the war if we are prepared not to be too hard on the Boers. It will no doubt be settled one way or the other before you get this letter.

I expect our move sweeping the high veldt has changed the idea of the Boers, and made them far more peacefully inclined than they were a few days ago. It will be good policy for the future of this country to treat them fairly well; and I hope I may be allowed to do away with anything humiliating to them in the surrender, if it comes off.

I believe Botha can make complete peace, and that De Wet and De la Rey and others will all give in if matters are settled at our meeting. (22.2.01.)

The interview, which took place at Middelburg on the last day of February 1901, was quite of a friendly nature, Kitchener entertaining Botha and his four staff officers at luncheon. The same evening he wrote to Brodrick:

MIDDELBURG, *February* 28, 1901.

I have had a long day with Louis Botha; he came in at 10 A.M. and left at about 3 P.M. He brought four staff officers with him, and they lunched with us. Botha has a nice unassuming manner, and seemed desirous of finishing the war, but somewhat doubtful of being able to induce his men to accept peace without independence in some form or other. I told him that independence in any form was impossible, and that any modified independence would be extremely dangerous, considering the mixed population, the effects of the war, and previous experience. This he agreed in, with evidently some regret.

He came prepared with a list of points which he considered should be answered before he could lay the matter of

and at any rate it can do no harm." To a private friend: "At last there looks some chance of finishing the war. I have just had a letter from Louis Botha asking me to meet him, to consider any means of bringing the war to a close. I shall of course meet him, and I hope the result may be satisfactory."

peace before his Government and the people. I have telegraphed the ten points to you, and will only now add my impressions during the conversation.

He seemed to think that representative government might be granted at once on cessation of hostilities, but did not press the matter. He spoke very strongly as to the feeling of his burghers about Milner's appointment, and at one time seemed to think it would entirely prevent any chance of their giving in. I assured him that Milner was a first-rate man, and that, in a short time, they would all agree, and that I thought there was no chance of a change. . . .

When the Kaffir question was brought up, it at once turned on the question of franchise for Kaffirs, to which they are greatly opposed. He stated it would be most dangerous for the burghers on their distant farms. I suggested it should be left open for a representative Government to decide upon later; this he thought satisfactory.

He was anxious that legal debts of the Republic should be paid out of revenue; he says that under the law they were allowed to issue notes for a million—these have not all been issued, but if they are repudiated it will entail great loss on farmers. In conversation it was suggested that such claims might be equitably considered by a judge, but I gave no opinion on the point. He, however, considered it one of great importance, and said he felt personally responsible, and hoped that the admission of these debts as valid against the Transvaal would not be refused.

The next important point which he spoke strongly about was amnesty to all for *bona fide* acts in the war; he mentioned Cape and Natal rebels, and said they could not desert them to be severely punished; he did not see much objection to their being disfranchised.

The minor points he referred to were:

Church property to remain untouched;
Public trusts and orphans' funds to remain untouched;
Languages, English and Dutch, to be equal in schools;
War tax on farms;

Government assistance to rebuild and restock farms;
Date of return of prisoners of war.

He had notes on the above points, and evidently came prepared.

I asked him, if he agreed in the settlement of the points raised, whether he could be certain that all commandos or bands would submit and lay down their arms.

He said he was more or less bound to the Free State, but he felt sure he could influence De Wet (if terms were the same for the Orange River Colony), and in that case he could guarantee complete cessation of hostilities and a general laying down of arms, and Briton and Burgher would then be friends again, and he and his officers would give the best assistance to the Government.

We talked about the conduct of the war without any bitterness. He promised not to take our ambulances again, and I agreed to let him have some medicines. He repeated that he and his people felt bitterly losing their independence, but he evidently did not think it impossible for them to agree to do so. He said, incidentally, that he could carry on for some time. I pointed out the hopelessness of the struggle on their part, and that they had no right to ruin the country further. He was very bitter about those that had surrendered, and did not like the peace committees, but he could not justify De Wet's murder of the peace envoy without trial—he said he feared it was the result of demoralisation caused by the war.

L. Botha is a quiet, capable man, and I have no doubt carries considerable weight with the burghers; he will be, I should think, a valuable assistance to the future good of the country in an official capacity.

It seems a pity that the war should go on for the points raised by Botha, which appear to me all capable of adjustment; and, supposing it cost two millions—that is to say, one million for notes issued by the Transvaal Government, and one million for rebuilding and restocking farms, which is the

most possible—it would only represent one month's expenditure out here on the war. I promised to write to Botha when I received the reply of the Government on the points raised, and he will then at once take steps in the matter.

By the same mail went a letter to Roberts:

I have written to Brodrick about my meeting with Botha and hope you will see my letter. If the Government wish to end the war, I do not see any difficulty in doing so, but I think it will go on for some time if the points raised by Botha cannot be answered. I do not think Botha is likely to be unreasonable; there is a good deal of sentiment about it—particularly as regards giving up their independence, which they feel very much.[1]

Kitchener believed, and said, that all the points raised by Botha were capable of adjustment; that the amount of money involved could not exceed the two millions; and that a continuance of the war could not be other than a matter for regret. After Botha's departure the proposed terms of settlement were embodied in a draft letter from the British to the Boer General, which was submitted to Milner and by him forwarded to the Home Government. The conditions were for the most part approved, but modifications were introduced on several important points—an amnesty for *bona fide* belligerents and Colonial rebels; the future form of government; the debts of the Transvaal Republic; pecuniary aid to farmers; and the status of Kaffirs. On March 7 Kitchener conveyed to Botha the decision of the British Government:

1 On the same day Roberts was writing to Kitchener: "The posters all over London to-day announce the surrender of Louis Botha to you at 9 A.M. at Middelburg. I sincerely hope it may be true, but no telegram has been received from you, and the F.O. and C.O. know nothing."

With reference to our conversation at Middelburg on February 28, I have the honour to inform you that, in the event of a general and complete cessation of hostilities, and the surrender of all rifles, ammunition, cannon, and other munitions of war in the hands of the burghers, or in Government depots, or elsewhere, His Majesty's government is prepared to adopt the following measures:—

His Majesty's Government will at once grant an amnesty in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony for all *bona fide* acts of war committed during the recent hostilities. British subjects belonging to Natal and Cape Colony, while they will not be compelled to return to these colonies, will, if they do so, be liable to be dealt with by the laws of those colonies specially passed to meet the circumstances arising out of the present war. As you are doubtless aware, the special law in the Cape Colony has greatly mitigated the ordinary penalties for High Treason in the present case. All prisoners of war, now in St. Helena, Ceylon, or elsewhere, being burghers or colonists, will, on the completion of the surrender, be brought back to their country as quickly as arrangements can be made for their transport.

At the earliest practicable date military administration will cease, and will be replaced by civil administration in the form of Crown Colony government. There will therefore be, in the first instance, in each of the new colonies, a Governor and an Executive Council, composed of the principal officials, with a Legislative Council, consisting of a certain number of official members to whom a nominated unofficial element will be added. But it is the desire of His Majesty's Government, as soon as circumstances permit, to introduce a representative element, and ultimately to concede to the new Colonies the privilege of self-government. Moreover, on the cessation of hostilities a High Court will be established in each of the new Colonies to administer the laws of the land, and this Court will be independent of the Executive.

Church property, public trusts, and orphan funds will be respected. Both the English and Dutch languages will be

used and taught in public schools when the parents of the children desire it, and allowed in Courts of Law.

As regards the debts of the late Republican Governments, His Majesty's Government cannot undertake any liability. It is, however, proposed, as an act of grace, to set aside a sum not exceeding one million pounds sterling to repay inhabitants of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony for goods requisitioned from them by the late Republican Governments, or subsequent to annexation, by Commandants in the field, being in a position to enforce such requisitions. But such claims will have to be established to the satisfaction of a Judge or Judicial Commission appointed by the Government to investigate and assess them; and, if exceeding in the aggregate one million pounds, they will be liable to reduction *pro rata.*

I also beg to inform your Honour that the new Government will take into immediate consideration the possibility of assisting by loan the occupants of farms, who will take the oath of allegiance, to repair any injuries sustained by destruction of buildings or loss of stock during the war; and that no special war tax will be imposed upon farms to defray the expense of the war.

When burghers require the protection of fire-arms, such will be allowed to them by licence, and, on due registration, provided they take the oath of allegiance. Licences will also be issued for sporting rifles, guns, etc., but military fire-arms will only be allowed for purposes of protection.

As regards the extension of the franchise to Kaffirs in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, it is not the intention of His Majesty's Government to give such franchise before representative government is granted to those Colonies, and if then given it will be so limited as to secure the just predominance of the white race. The legal position of coloured persons will, however, be similar to that which they hold in the Cape Colony.

In conclusion, I must inform your Honour that, if the terms now offered are not accepted after a reasonable delay for consideration, they must be regarded as cancelled.

Kitchener was doubtful whether the amendments made at the Colonial Office—particularly those referring to assistance to be given only in the shape of loans, and the question of the enfranchisement of natives—would be accepted by the Boers, and warned Brodrick that Botha might fail to win over the representatives of the Orange Colony. His misgivings were justified, for De Wet and Steyn remained deaf to all arguments, and ten days later Botha abruptly, and without giving any reason, broke off the negotiations.

Kitchener was avowedly disappointed, and was at no pains either to conceal his chagrin or to mask his efforts towards a just peace.

I was afraid [he wrote to Brodrick on March 22] Botha could hardly accept the terms offered. The Boers have a good deal of sentiment of honour amongst them—particularly the leaders—and leaving those that had helped them to go to prison for six years, as has been done in Natal, would, I felt sure, make it almost impossible for them to accept. I, therefore, insisted on my views being sent home in Milner's telegram to the Colonial Secretary. I hardly expected, however, after Milner's strongly worded objection to my proposition, that the Government would decide differently to what they did.

I did all in my power to urge Milner to change his views, which on this subject seem to me very narrow. I feel certain, and have good grounds for knowing, that an amnesty or King's pardon for the two or three hundred rebels in question (carrying with it disfranchisement, which Botha willingly accepted) would be extremely popular amongst the majority of the British and all the Dutch in South Africa; but there no doubt exists a small section in both Colonies who are opposed to any conciliatory measures being taken to end the war, and I fear their influence is paramount; they want extermination, and I suppose will get it.

My views were that once the Boers gave up their inde-

pendence and laid down their arms, the main object of the Government was attained, and that the future Civil Administration would soon heal old sores and bring the people together again. After the lesson they have had, they are not likely to break out again. Milner's views may be strictly just, but they are to my mind vindictive, and I do not know of a case in history when, under similar circumstances, an amnesty has not been granted.

We are now carrying the war on to put two or three hundred Dutchmen in prison at the end of it. It seems to me absurd and wrong, and I wonder the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not have a fit.

Mrs. Botha has written to ask her husband if the amnesty question is the only one they are now fighting for; if he replies in the affirmative, could anything be done if Botha were induced to ask for better terms for the rebels, and for a reconsideration of their case? Should this be possible please wire me.

On the very day that Kitchener was making this appeal for judicious clemency towards an opponent with his back to the wall, Brodrick was writing:

We are all very much opposed to a complete amnesty to Cape and Natal rebels. The feeling is that it will be a surviving reproach on us. The loyalists at least have surely a right to see the very moderate Cape punishments inflicted on rebels. . . . Is it not likely that with one more turn of the military screw, they will be ready for submission? We shall be glad in any case when the time arrives. (22.3.01.)

But the screw was to be turned *ad nauseam* before that time came—if, indeed, it ever fully came at all. Meanwhile the Man on the Spot had justifiable misgivings as to whether the war—with all its misery and all its waste—was being continued merely "to put two or three hundred Dutchmen in prison at the end of it."

CHAPTER XLV

It was not until May 1901 that Kitchener, though his hands were as ready to strike as his head was to treat, could assume any initiative. The whole position, ranging over a vast area, bristled with difficulty. The policy of concentration had not produced the intended effect. De Wet, hunted up and down, and in and out of, the Orange Colony, was still at large. French's drive had depressed but had not subdued Eastern Transvaal, and Blood's operations in Northern Transvaal had just fallen short of their expected success. The Cape Colony rebellion had been stifled, but was not extinct.[1]

Meanwhile military exigencies had not been allowed to over-ride the need of an early revival of civil industries.

I am sure [Kitchener told Roberts early in March] you will be glad to hear I am making a start at opening the Johannesburg Mines. I am allowing 350 stamps to start under the supervision of the Chamber of Mines and safeguarding our interests as regards the men on service with our troops. I have no doubt it will have a good effect, and I

1 In a private letter Kitchener alluded to the efforts, happily unsuccessful, of a notorious journalist to make further bad blood in the Colony: "S——'s lies were distributed all through Cape Colony. Our troops found them in almost every house. The result has been the reverse of what was anticipated. Instead of the Dutch being excited to take up arms against us the exactly contrary effect has been produced, as they do not want the same 'horrors' near them! Out of evil sometimes good comes, and the Dutch have remained very quietly at home, showing plenty of sympathy, but giving no help" (25.1.01).

am now well off for supplies here and can afford the extra railway accommodation they will want for this project. It has not definitely started yet, but will I expect in a few days. I am also arranging to move the troops out of the town of Johannesburg, leaving interior defence to the volunteers, Rand Rifles, and Mine Guards.

And a month later:

The mines at Johannesburg are now starting work, and we shall soon be turning out a certain amount of gold. I expect this will have a depressing effect on the Boers.

Moreover, a nominated Town Council had now taken over the municipal business of Johannesburg, while in both the new Colonies civil departments were organised, and military officials were by degrees giving place to civilians.

Sir Alfred Milner, after four years' continuous strain, felt that the framework of reconstruction was sufficiently strong to permit of his going on leave, and wrote to Kitchener:

H.M.'s Government is willing I should clear for three months at an early date, but rather puzzled how to provide for my work in my absence. The simplest thing is to let matters take their course under the existing Commission. By the terms of my commission as H.C. in case of my absence all my powers pass if *no special provision is made* to the senior Military Officer in South Africa, and these powers include at present the Administratorship of the two new Colonies. Therefore if nothing is done you would, on my leaving, *ipso facto,* succeed to all my powers while I was away. H.M.'s Government would, I know, be agreeable to this, if you were, and I *ne demande pas mieux.* The only difficulty is that the mass of work is enormous, and you have your hands more than full already. The only way in which you could *live* would be to tell all the principal men under you to carry on

as quietly as possible, *shelve all questions which required long* consideration, and only come to you in matters of *quite first-rate importance and requiring immediate decision.* In that case you might get on without demands on your time which, with your existing heavy responsibilities, you could not possibly submit to. But I would not suggest even this if you objected. (9.4.01.)

Kitchener was quite willing to "double" for a while the duties of Commander-in-Chief and High Commissioner, and a little later on told Brodrick, "Milner's work, as left for me, is not excessive. I can manage it all right, and I think his affairs are going on smoothly. He has a very good legal adviser in Solomon. I am of course sending all civil matters to Mr. Chamberlain."

The arrival of the South African winter gave rise at home to a sanguine expectation that its hardships for man and beast on the veldt would effectually damp the Boers' ardour, and might effectively damage their cause. Animated by this bright idea, the Government suggested a reduction of the troops in the field, and this just when it might have seemed desirable to strengthen the Commander-in-Chief's hands for pressing his own rigours with those of the season.

Kitchener did not immediately turn down the proposal. On July 5 he wrote to Brodrick:

Considering the enormous expenditure going on, Lord Roberts's telegram on the subject of reduction of the forces in South Africa was not a surprise. I have been for some time fortifying the railway lines with blockhouses, so as to reduce the numbers employed in defending the lines, which duty takes up by far the greater number of the troops in South Africa, and I am glad to say these works are now so

far forward that, to my mind (though in this some of my generals do not willingly agree), a reduction of the forces can be safely carried out. . . . Out of the 140,000 men proposed by Lord Roberts, I think I may calculate on having 100,000 Infantry and Mounted troops, leaving 40,000 for Artillery, Engineers, Departmental Corps, and sick.

But a fortnight later he plainly intimated that, whereas any reduction of his forces must depend entirely on Cape Colony being clear and quiet, a doleful letter just received pictured its present condition as confused and turbulent:

According to the intelligence and other reports which have been communicated to me [wrote the Governor] more than five-sixths of that portion of Cape Colony which is south of the Orange River is now more or less harassed by the guerilla operations of the enemy. We hold the towns and most of the villages and the railways; but, except within a strip varying from about 50 to 100 miles along the coast, travelling without an escort is unsafe. Even the railways are occasionally broken and trains derailed. . . . Murraysburg is altogether unguarded, and has lately been made use of by the Boers as a kind of base. To-day news comes that the Boers have burnt down the public buildings and the houses of the loyalists there. . . .

Speaking generally, the state of affairs is considerably worse than it was when I arrived in the Colony four months ago, and it is now more than six months since this second invasion of the Colony commenced. . . . There seems no doubt that something like 50 per cent of the white inhabitants of Cape Colony are more or less in sympathy with the Boers. . . . I venture to press very earnestly on your Lordship the desirability of making a determined effort to clear the Colony of the guerilla bands as soon as possible.

Kitchener replied that the Government of Cape Colony might in several ways do more to cope with

the situation: (1) by rendering assistance in collecting horses; (2) by extending martial law—as the General Officer Commanding had, so far in vain, requested; (3) by insisting on more energetic action on the part of the local authorities throughout the Colony; (4) by taking better precautions against the leakage to the enemy of arms and ammunition now in the hands of local defence forces.

Evidently the condition expressly laid down as an essential preliminary to any reduction in the strength of his Army was at present far from fulfilment. At the end of July Kitchener stated that in the present temper of Cape Colony he could not see his way to meet the wishes of the Government; and on September 8 he wrote bluntly: "I enclose correspondence about martial law in Cape Ports, which shows the attitude taken up by the Cape Government. It is nothing less than one of actual hostility to His Majesty's forces, and the same is going on throughout the Colony."

The difficulties of the whole situation, exacerbated as they were by the internal condition of the Colony, seemed for a moment to have had effect even on Kitchener's iron nerves. For once, a confession of the weakness of the flesh was wrung from him. "I am not well," he wrote to a friend, "and feel terribly disheartened." But his physical resilience quickly asserted itself. "I was very seedy last mail," he wrote to the same correspondent, "but I am all right again, and feel there is still hope of ending this miserable business before very long."

CHAPTER XLVI

The Boers, on their side, had not been without their share of trouble. A council of war, held early in May near Ermelo, was attended by the members of the late Transvaal Government, together with Botha, J. C. Smuts, Ben Viljoen, and Chris Botha. It was but dismal fare which they met to discuss. Viljoen with his account of the devastation in the north-east, and Smuts with his story of the defeats of Wildfontein and Goldwoorintzicht, did little to cheer up a gloomy gathering. Even the imperturbable Botha was a little worried by the prospect of the high veldt, where he had so long disported himself, being overrun by British columns.

The growing record of surrenders, the failing supply of ammunition, the improbability of foreign interference, the already waning authority of the leaders, had a depressing effect on the meeting. Without consulting the Free Staters, the Council resolved that Kitchener should be asked to let the Transvaalers send a representative to Europe to confer with Kruger as to the prosecution of the war; President Steyn was to be informed of this decision, and in the event of Kitchener's refusal, an armistice was to be asked for so that the Governments of the two Republics might take counsel as to their future course.

A letter was accordingly sent to Steyn, broadly hinting that the time for further resistance had passed; to this he dashed off a furious reply denouncing both the application to Kitchener and the bare idea of an armistice. Steyn, however, could only speak for himself, and a general council of war —very difficult to convene—would be required to register anything like a binding decision.

By this time the winter campaign had opened and Kitchener, on May 9, 1901, could write to Brodrick:

> Last month we took 2000 Boers out of the field, a good many rifles, and over half a million rounds of ammunition. Clearing up the north has done a great deal of good and, as far as I can make out, the enemy have no plans. There is a large and, I hope, growing party amongst them who think the terms offered should have been accepted, and that their leaders are betraying the people, possibly for personal reasons. The number of surrenders has greatly increased in the Transvaal, which does not look as if the burgher camps were so very bad.
>
> Things are not quite so satisfactory in the Orange River Colony. De Wet, Brand, and Hertzog seem to be able to keep up the irreconcilable feeling and suppress all moderate counsels. Steyn's influence seems to have decreased. I cannot make out what they intend to do beyond keeping up a hostile attitude, and taking advantage of any slips we may make. . . .
>
> I started the mines working at Johannesburg last Saturday, and I hope this will have a depressing effect on the Boer enthusiasts. Our being able to do it shows that the country is getting slowly settled. Attacks on railway lines have greatly decreased owing to our improved blockhouses, and the lines are now gradually forming barriers through the country which hostile forces cannot cross; this breaks them up into areas which we will gradually clear. Having cleared the Roos-Senekal district a good many columns will now be avail-

able to clear the country east of Carolina, which has not been touched and is a Boer stronghold. Vigorous operations are also going against De la Rey in the west, and an expedition has started for Louis Trichardt in the north.

In the Orange River Colony Elliot is sweeping the country along the Vaal, moving east until he reaches the Natal frontier. Rundle is in Fouriesburg and operating from there. C. Knox will in a day or two move west of the line on Bothaville, and Bruce Hamilton is clearing up the southern portion along the Orange River. In the Colony small bands are being cleared up everywhere, and the Colonial Defence Force is now taking a greater part and is useful. . . .

I have had no further communication with Botha. I send you some letters caught on the enemy's despatch riders. You will see the absurd lies spread by the leaders to keep their men in the field. It seems impossible to believe the credulity of the Boers. A large party were coming in yesterday to surrender, when they were told from Johannesburg that war had broken out between Russia and England, and so they all went back.

On the same date he confides to Roberts his fear that a lost opportunity may mean a long bill:

I wish I could tell you when the end of the war would come. . . . I much dread its degenerating into uncontrollable brigandage, which might take a very long time to suppress, and cause incalculable damage to the country and enormous expense. Hence my desire for terms with Botha, who could control the enemy's force. However, that is probably all over now, and how it will end I cannot see. That they are being visibly weakened there is no doubt, but the end is *khadu jaunta* ["very uncertain"].

The prospect for the ensuing months presented little that was roseate to either side. The saner and more moderate Boers could no longer hug themselves with hopes of ultimate success. The British troops

had no doubt on this point, but saw nothing as yet to indicate finality, and were well aware that "hide-and-seek" played in the winter is bound to be a grim war game.

In addition to the columns quoted by Kitchener, Haig was operating in Cape Colony, and Colonel Harold Grenfell and Colenbrander were in the north of the Transvaal; while Plumer and Bindon Blood, after a breather in the north-east, were on the move in the south-east against Botha and Viljoen.

Methuen, having toiled hard and caught little in Western Transvaal, had retired with Rawlinson to the Kimberley-Mafeking railway; Babington and Ingouville-Williams had repaired to Klerksdorp; Dixon [1] had gone to his camp at Naauwpoort, south of the Magaliesberg. The redoubtable De la Rey was thought to have stowed himself away in the south near Wolmaranstadt, and Methuen was detailed to look him up. Dixon, all unaware that his was the path in which the real danger lurked, left his camp on May 26, proposing to clear farms and search for hidden guns and ammunition [2] among the hills west of Naauwpoort. On May 29, near Vlakfontein, his rearguard was attacked and broken up by Kemp under cover of a veldt fire. Dixon at once retorted, and at some cost retrieved the position, but was forced by sheer weakness to retire to his base. Every available man was rushed up to the rescue, but only to find that the Boers had performed the usual vanishing trick.

1 Major-General James Babington; Major-General Edward Ingouville-Williams; Col. Sir Henry Dixon.

2 The Boers sometimes over-reached themselves in burying ammunition. On one occasion they confided the job to two men, so that the place should be kept secret; but these trusted agents being killed directly after, the secret died with them.

Kitchener, remembering the disabilities of untried troops, was content to say, "As far as I can see, our troops behaved well and no blame attaches to any one I am afraid some of the new Yeomanry were somewhat wild, but that must be expected at first."

Early in June the Free Staters held a conclave, De la Rey, De Wet, and Steyn conferring at Reitz as to the Transvaalers' proposal of overtures for peace. Steyn was particularly anxious to be backed by De la Rey in negativing the proposal, and it was arranged that the trio should go north and meet Botha at Ermelo.

Kitchener could only report in very qualified terms an improvement in the outlook:

> There is no doubt the Boers are thoroughly tired of fighting, but are still kept at it by their officers, in hopes that something will turn up. We have heard the same story so often that it has to be taken with misgiving; still everything seems to point to an end coming before very long. De Wet's influence is the doubtful point; he is greatly against giving in, and is now trying to join Botha. De la Rey is also going to join Botha; his influence, although better than De Wet's, would not be for general surrender. I therefore fear that De Wet and De la Rey combined will induce Botha to go on through the winter. (Kitchener to Roberts, 7.6.01.)

Unfortunately, events conspired to hearten the Boers. Vlakfontein, which they magnified into a signal success, had for its sequel on June 12 Muller's attack at Wilmansrust on the Victorian Mounted Rifles. The Colonial horsemen failed alike in vigilance and discipline, and Muller was able to rush their camp at dusk. The Regular officers in vain attempted to rally their men, and the Boers, though inferior in numbers, trekked defiantly off with their

prize of pom-poms, rifles, ammunition, and stores. This untoward incident, in itself petty enough, was highly inopportune and had an effect wholly disproportionate to its military importance.

A week later the two Boer Governments held their long-deferred meeting on June 20, at Waterval, near Standerton. Their reply to the main question—to fight or not to fight—was now hardly in doubt. Steyn and De Wet plumped for war; Kruger[1] had cabled a vehement exhortation to hold out; and any inclination which the other leaders might have had toward a settlement was dispelled by the success snatched at Wilmansrust. They knew well enough that they were hopelessly outnumbered and must surely be out-manœuvred; but this last "scrap" had enhanced their reliance on their almost uncanny mobility, and encouraged the hope that they might either wear down their opponents or that foreign intervention would somehow and from somewhere be forthcoming. Both surmises were doomed to disappointment, but they sufficed to beguile desperate men into a desperate decision, which was to entail another twelve months' devastation of their own land, with, as a set-off, an increase of a hundred millions sterling to the British National Debt.

1 Kitchener had granted special permission for Kruger to be consulted by telegraph.

CHAPTER XLVII

The condition of Cape Colony at the moment acted on the Transvaal leaders as an exhilarating, but unsustaining, stimulant. To the brilliant young Cambridge graduate, J. C. Smuts,[1] late Attorney-General at Pretoria, was allotted the task of cultivating and spreading the germ of disaffection in the Colony, where operations promised well, inasmuch as the land had not been molested and the inhabitants were largely, if latently, in sympathy with the Boers. Smuts repaired with De la Rey to the Western Transvaal to mature plans, while Viljoen and Muller betook themselves to the Middelburg district.

In a manifesto just then published, Kruger expressed the comfortable belief that all would be well in the end, adding a complacent assurance that proper division should be made for the women and children in the Concentration Camps, and for the prisoners of war. As a corollary, a stubborn declaration, inspired by the venerable refugee in Holland, was signed by Steyn and Schalk Burger:

No peace will be made, and no peace conditions accepted, by which our independence and national existence, or the

1 Smuts's maiden effort had been to immolate a British detachment at Modderfontein Nek in January, and a few weeks later in a brush with Cunningham at Krugersdorp he had startled and worsted the British General.

interests of our Colonial brothers, shall be the price paid; and the war will be vigorously prosecuted by taking all measures necessary for the maintenance of our independence and interests.

Kitchener's lingering hopes of an early peace were sadly dashed, but Brodrick tactfully wrote to him:

I would only beg you to understand that the telegraphing to and fro does not indicate the slightest want of confidence of the Government in your administration and conduct of the very difficult task you have resting upon you. We are prepared to back you to the full, and shall believe in your efforts, however long drawn out the war may be; and the public here have complete confidence in you. (13.7.01.)

Steyn, at this juncture, had to reconstitute his Government, for on his return with his colleagues to the Free State they fell across Elliot,[1] whose subordinate, Broadwood, dropped on the confederates at Reitz, and took the whole party prisoners except Steyn, the President making a somewhat undignified exit as he galloped off in his night-shirt.

Broadwood had secured, besides the persons of the notables, some valuable information, and the letters found in Steyn's baggage showed afresh that to the obstinacy of the Free Staters was chargeable the continuance of hostilities. Among the papers seized was a letter written by Smuts to Steyn stating that, if they had to give up now, it would be with the intention of fighting again when England might be in difficulties.

But just as the Sikhs, whom we fought and whose territory we annexed in 1849, were amongst our staunchest supporters in arms in the Indian Mutiny in 1857, so the Transvaal patriots were a dozen years

1 Lieutenant-General Sir Edward Locke Elliot.

later to be our doughty comrades in the war which convulsed the world.

For his audacious adventure into the Colony Smuts was endued with the heart of a dare-devil soldier and the head of a shrewd lawyer. As a start, he had to collect an adequate force under the very nose of several British columns, and then to thread his way through the whole length of the Orange River Colony, evading the attentions of four British Commanders. What he contrived to do would fill a spicy chapter in any story of guerilla warfare.

By the middle of July he had assembled 340 resolute spirits divided into four parties—under Van der Venter, Kirster, Bouwer, and Dreyer—whose rendezvous was fixed at a spot on the Vet River, near Hoopstadt. Kitchener ordered two columns to make for the Hoopstadt district, while three others converged on different points of the Vaal. Elliot was moving on the Modder River, by way of Vredefort and Klerksdorp, to join hands with Bruce Hamilton; and Smuts, wriggling round to Elliot's rear, just saved his neck from the noose set for him by the drive which was to clear South-Western Transvaal and the Orange River Colony. But some nasty surprises awaited him. Besides seven columns rapidly approaching him from the north, another bevy seemed to bar his road in every direction. Smuts was in fact up against a drive which was to eclipse its predecessor, and for which Kitchener had impressed most of the columns in the Transvaal and the Orange Colony.

Much as in the Indian kheddahs elephants are driven up rapidly narrowing jungle lanes and compelled into a stockade, Kitchener's far-stretching

columns were set to sweep in all the outlying Boer commandos, and chase them right up to the north-western portion of the Orange Colony, bounded by the Vaal River on the north, the Modder on the south, and the two main railways with their forbidding line of blockhouses on the east and west. Here was, so to speak, the stockade into which the quarry was to be rushed and then demolished by the inner circle of columns. The final impetus was to be given from the north. In the south, besides the Modder River, a barrier was presented by the line of posts manned by the South African Constabulary, which ran from Bloemfontein to Petrusberg, and thence on to Jacobsdal.

In the second week of July Bruce Hamilton had moved his force to the west of the line, and stationed half of them under Rochfort,[1] Williams, and Byng behind the Constabulary cordon, with their flanks on the Wegdraai Drift of the Riet River to Emmaus. This line was prolonged eastward to the railway by Knox, who lined the Fauresmith—Edenburg road. The rest of Hamilton's men guarded the Orange River from Norval's Point to Ramah, thus forming a third line of beaters. Elliot meanwhile was sweeping on from the east, and, coasting along the Vaal, reached Klerksdorp, just north of the culminating point of the drive.

Towards the end of July the troops which had been on Smuts's immediate track were poised for a fresh swoop. Elliot now commanded the seven columns which were to form the main line of beaters, and behind this a column under Garratt[2] was detailed to

1 Major-General Sir A. Rochfort.
2 Brigadier-General Francis Garratt.

worry any of the enemy who might break back. In addition to these, "stops" were provided on both flanks, and Plumer, summoned from a distant part of the Transvaal, was posted at the south-western angle of the Boer fastness. In the middle of July Plumer was on the Delagoa railway, far from the scene of operations, but Kitchener rushed him south by rail, refitted him at Bloemfontein on July 18, and landed him on the 30th at Modder River Station.

The moves of the various columns were co-ordinated from the Commander-in-Chief's office, like those of trains in a time-table. The beaters were now ready, the "stops" were posted, and—in sportsman's parlance—everything turned on what game would be brought up to the guns. It was known that a number of local commandos were inside the cordon, and that there were many hitherto untouched laagers and farms, as well as countless hordes of cattle and sheep.

On July 29 the drive proper commenced, Elliot's columns moving southwards in parallel lines, the others falling in and conforming to the movement as the line reached them. On August 10 Elliot reached the Modder River and the drive was over. The bag as regards men was meagre; only seventeen Boers were killed or wounded, and the 259 prisoners were generally of a poor type. In the south Bruce Hamilton, Knox, and the Constabulary had taken during the month about 300 prisoners, and had given to the country between the Modder and Orange Rivers the complexion of a wilderness. Many wagons, 186,000 sheep, and 21,000 cattle had been seized; but the principal quarry still roamed at large, as Elliot's lines had been perforated at night.

The leaders of the local commandos had been able to choose between eluding their pursuers and engaging them: Smuts had his own offensive to carry out, and had enjoyed the personal experience of being ringed in by 15,000 British troops, and headed off by lines of railway blockhouses manned by a formidable force of Constabulary. On August 3, having slipped behind the British line, he sent Van der Venter with a part of his force to the Cape Colony border, where his lieutenant pierced the Bloemfontein—Thaba 'Nchu line of Constabulary. Smuts himself, hanging on Elliot's rear, crossed the Modder and went through the Constabulary posts—only to find a cluster of little columns around him. He tiptoed south to Springfontein, but then had to turn about and sprint seventy miles towards Bloemfontein. Then he made another dash southwards and worked his way over the railroad. At Reddersburg he lost a handful of prisoners to Rawlinson; he was then bitten at by Major Damant, but on August 27 he managed, with his jaded residue of 250 men, to join Van der Venter at Zastron. Here he also met Kritzinger —fresh from his fifteen weeks' incursion into Cape Colony and exulting over his successful evasion of the constant and pressing attentions of French.

The presence of the three fiery spirits so near the Cape Colony frontier was not to be tolerated: to catch them at all costs was the order of the day. Plumer, Rawlinson, Thorneycroft, and Pilcher [1] were hurried up; the Orange River from Bethulie to the Basuto border was held by Fitzroy Hart [2]; and a new line of blockhouses between Bethulie and the Her-

1 Major-General A. Thorneycroft; Major-General T. Pilcher.
2 Major-General Sir Fitzroy Hart.

schel border was occupied by the Highland Light Infantry, with a reserve of Connaught Rangers at Lemoenfontein.

To all appearances Smuts and Kritzinger were once more engirdled. Kitchener wrote to Brodrick:

> We are now doing all we can to prevent Kritzinger and Malan and a party of Transvaalers under Smuts, the late Attorney-General, from getting back into Cape Colony. Our blockhouse lines are almost complete, and I have moved down a considerable number of troops to guard the frontier. I hope we shall frustrate them and drive them north again. The area between the Orange River and the Ladybrand—Modder River line has been so thoroughly cleared of supplies that I doubt the enemy's being able to exist there for any length of time. (23.8.01.)

The position of the Boer leaders seemed sufficiently parlous; but this kind of crisis had by now become second nature to them, and they carried on in happy ignorance, and complete defiance, of all recognised military tactics.

Kritzinger and Brand joined hands for a time and then separated. While the former snapped up some of Hart's force near the Orange River, the latter near Saunalisport accounted for a party of Mounted Infantry with a couple of guns.

Smuts, with French thundering at his heels, started southwards, and on September 17 actually ambushed and got the better of a detachment of Regular Cavalry. Kitchener telegraphed:

> The squadron 17th Lancers in Cape Colony, severely mauled by Smuts's commando, fought well. The Boers were surrounded and determined to get through at all costs, which they did with severe loss. The only mistake

was that the Boers, being dressed in khaki, were allowed to get to close quarters before they were fired on.

Smuts then turned aside to join Schupers, who had been active for some time in the south-western districts near the sea. Finding, however, that Schupers had just been "scuppered," he boldly proceeded to invade the Ceres district—less than a hundred miles from Cape Town—where he arrived at the beginning of November. Since June he had trekked 1100 miles, kept clear of the far-flung net, and ridden the country from the Transvaal to the far end of the Colony.

CHAPTER XLVIII

On August 7 was issued a not very succulent proclamation penned in London. Opening with a legal preamble descriptive of the situation, it assured the Boers that their numbers were insignificant, their guns and munitions all but exhausted, and their prospects hopeless. In minatory terms their unconditional surrender was demanded before September 15, the penalty for non-compliance being—for Government officials, commandants, field cornets, and leaders—perpetual banishment; while recalcitrant burghers were warned that the cost of maintaining their families in the Concentration Camps was to be recoverable by a levy on their property, real or personal.

The Downing Street composition read much like a lawyer's writ,[1] and was about as popular. Botha, Steyn, and De Wet replied with curled lip; the burghers generally treated it with contemptuous silence.

Kitchener, while willing to give the civilian prescription for ending the war every chance, was putting into effect a more practical plan. Hitherto the blockhouses had been confined to the railway. But the beginning of the end may perhaps be traced to their more extensive and more vigorous use. The blockhouses were now to stretch themselves relent-

1 Kitchener wished that there were "not so many preliminary 'paras' beginning 'whereas,' which only puzzle the Boers." "If," he said, "they can argue over any one of them, they do so, and think they can upset the proclamation in consequence" (Kitchener to Brodrick, 2.8.01).

lessly across the country and to create fenced areas within which the Boers could be accounted for in detail. The blockhouse lines, following those of the roads, would themselves be immune from danger, and would handsomely contribute fresh means of communication and facilities for dealing powerful offensive strokes. It was also recognised that the posts had attempted to combine dual functions; they had been useful for active clearing work and for protecting lines of communication, but, when called upon, offered a very flabby barrier. It was decided that the posts should be limited to their proper sphere; the Constabulary were to be employed in manning interior sets of posts within areas enclosed by blockhouses; the duty of sweeping clean enclosed areas was to devolve on really mobile columns.

These preparations were not allowed to slacken work in the field. Elliot's drive in August and September through the eastern part of the Orange River Colony effected little. Kritzinger could not be lured out of his retreat between the Orange and Caledon Rivers, and De Wet was still on the war-path. In Eastern Transvaal the Boers were quiescent, but in Western Transvaal De la Rey and Kemp were brisk as ever. The latter, after nonplussing several endeavours to encircle him in the Zwartruggens, gave a hand to his friend in attacking Methuen near the Marico River on September 5, but Methuen's spirit had fired his Yeomanry, who put up a capital and wholly successful fight.

No serious attempt had yet been made to deal with Botha in the Ermelo district. Early in September the Boer General made a dash for Piet Retief with a commando a thousand strong.

Lyttelton, who directed the pursuit against him, was badly misinformed as to his real objective, which was Dundee, about forty miles due north of Ladysmith. On September 17 a mounted column under Gough,[1] which had been sent out from Dundee to escort an incoming convoy, stumbled on Botha at Blood River Poort. Seeing a number of horses turned out to graze, Gough congratulated himself on the rare chance of surprising dismounted Boers. But he reckoned without Botha's main body, which galloped up and rolled over the British line from right to left in ten minutes. Six officers and 38 men of the Mounted Infantry were killed or wounded, and 6 officers and 235 men taken prisoners. After searching inquiry, the Commander-in-Chief exonerated Gough: "Gough's affair might happen to any one. He fell into a carefully-prepared trap in very difficult ground. The bait was 200 men of the enemy off-saddled, and the whole force of the enemy carefully concealed" (Kitchener to Brodrick, 20.9.01).

But the Blood River Poort surprise was taken very seriously. Troops were bustled up from every quarter, and a force of 16,000 British with 40 guns was pitted against a raiding commando of 2000 men. Botha must anyhow be headed back and every door shut against him, especially that by which he had entered the southern corner of the Transvaal.

Curiously enough, the Boer General, who might well have been flushed by his success, failed to play it up, and as he was hesitating the Buffalo River rose in flood in front of him, and denied him Dundee. He then made up his mind to enter Natal through

1 Colonel Hubert Gough.

Zululand at a point just below the confluence of the Tugela and Buffalo Rivers, and on September 24 arrived at Babanago Mountain, close to the Zulu frontier, with 2000 men. Before him lay the Itala Mountain, at the base of which stood a fortified British post, and ten miles to the west a smaller post at Prospect. Botha determined to rush both these posts. He had begun to realise that his dash on Natal had no chance of success, and that if he hung about there too long he would certainly be caught. He understood that the posts were weakly held, and thought by bringing off a cheap *coup* to create a diversion which would cover his retreat.

Emmett and Grobler were told off to take Prospect, and Chris Botha was thrown against Itala, where Major Chapman against heavy odds put up a fine fight that lasted for 23 hours. Both sides lost heavily, but the Boers were the first beaten, and Chapman took his battered but undaunted little force to Nkandhle. At Prospect, the position being entirely tenable, the assailants received much and inflicted little punishment.

The two assaults having failed, Botha renounced all further idea of a campaign on the Tugela, sent off a rather stiff letter to the Transvaal Government, and turned his mind, and his men, to retreat. Lyttelton was not made aware of this till four days later, and Bruce Hamilton, after a fine march of 48 miles in 23 hours, reached Itala on the 28th, to find he had been trudging along parallel to Botha, but in the opposite direction.

Walter Kitchener was ordered by his brother to block Botha's retreat in the north by occupying the

passes in the Pondwana Mountains. Bruce Hamilton was to move up from the south towards Walter Kitchener, and Clements was directed to operate from the west. But Botha secured a start of three days, and with the British columns ponderously plodding on in step with their ox-transport, Hamilton could only on October 5 reach the Inklayatic Mountain, Botha having fetched up in the neighbourhood six days earlier. Unable to force the pass at Vaalkranz Nek, he shed his transport and sat astride the road to Pivaen Bridge, where Walter Kitchener found him. He then fought a clever rearguard action, forded the Pivaen, and, dismissing his local adherents, passed with the relict of his commando through Piet Retief, the gate by which he had originally entered. The story of the pursuit of Botha is that of the hare and the tortoise, with the difference that the hare won the race.

Kitchener was sorely disappointed, but, loyal to a subordinate who had honestly, if heavily, done his best, he wrote home on October 18:

> Botha has escaped from Natal by passing through Swaziland. I am sorry we were not able to stop him, but I think he has lost considerably both in prestige as a leader, and materially in the numbers of wounded and loss of transport. Lyttelton did all he could, I think, but bad weather made the movement of troops very slow, and enabled the Boers to get away by abandoning their transport. (Kitchener to Brodrick.)

Botha had enjoined Viljoen to carry on in his absence, but the deputy was cowed by the assiduous attentions of Benson,[1] whose raids on the high veldt had provoked terror and resentment. Moreover,

1 Colonel Benson, R.A.

the steady contraction of Kitchener's great ring-fence had sensibly diminished Botha's practicable area of operations. The return of the Boer General put new life into the commandos, and a cry of wrath went up from his stalwarts, the men of Ermelo and Carolina, who found that during their absence their homes had been ruined or raided. Their hot desire for revenge was voiced in a fierce demand for reprisals on Benson.

The latter had found it necessary to return to the Delagoa Bay railway to refit, and set out on October 30. The weather was bad, and Grobler continually pressed the rearguard, which in the afternoon was halted on Gun Hill with two field-guns. Grobler with his main force overwhelmed the infantry detachment between the hill and an adjacent ridge on which Botha was perched, silenced the guns, charged Gun Hill, and in half-an-hour the troops on the hill were cut to pieces, the officers all killed or wounded, and Benson himself mortally hurt. The British main body, encamped a short distance off, was itself awkwardly attacked, and could offer little help. The Boers failed, as usual, to follow up their success, and Colonel Wools-Sampson,[1] who took over Benson's command, was able to form an inner circle of entrenchments and maintain himself until relieved on November 1.

Benson's death was a genuine grief to Kitchener:

> I am very much upset at this most sad affair of Benson's column. I have just heard that he has died of his wounds. What can be done to prevent this sort of occurrence?
>
> I have not got full details yet, but it is the usual thing. The Boers observe the movements of a column from a long

1 Colonel Sir Aubrey Wools-Sampson.

way off, only showing a very few men; then having chosen some advantage—in this case it was the weather—they charge in with great boldness, and the result is a serious casualty list. Benson's was one of my best columns, and had a most excellent and efficient intelligence run by Wools-Sampson. He knew every inch of the ground, having been constantly in that part of the country, and my last telegram from him on the 29th was to the effect that the country was clear, and that he thought the time had come to move the line of posts forward from the Wilge River.

This is only to show you how difficult it is to prevent these occurrences. I have tried all I can to keep columns safe, and yet vigorously to push the war; but some risks must be run, and if a column like Benson's, operating 20 miles outside our lines, is not fairly safe, it is a very serious matter, and will require a large addition to our forces to carry on the war. (Kitchener to Brodrick, 1.11.01.)

Just at this time a proposal was rather gingerly made by Roberts, who asked Kitchener whether a Chief of the Staff in the person of Sir Ian Hamilton would be welcome. The offer was accepted with unexpected alacrity:

Nov. 5, 1901.—I am extremely grateful; there is nothing I should like better. He is just the man I want. Hamilton will be a great help to me. You will no doubt let him bring me your latest views; but is there anything you could telegraph that you think I could do to bring the war to a more rapid conclusion? Sometimes those at a distance can see things that those on the spot miss. I can make fairly steady progress, and I try continually for something more; but I can never make a certainty of the latter, the Boers being always able to evade us, as in the recent Natal operations.

The Blockhouse system does a great deal, but it takes up a large number of infantry. I should like to extend the line considerably; also to deal effectually with the most difficult

question, how to make troops more mobile. I have tried pack-saddles and have to an extent succeeded; but it is not enough to catch the Boers, who go with nothing, and trust to pick up a few mealies in a native hut.

The revival of Boer activity in the South African spring of 1901 was extended to Western Transvaal, where, for the moment, Kitchener could only spare Kekewich to face Kemp and De la Rey. Kekewich on September 13 left Naauwpoort for the Magaliesberg, and with 800 infantry, 560 mounted men, 3 guns and a pom-pom moved into the Zwartruggens, a rugged forest district peculiarly suited to Boer tactics. On the 29th he bivouacked at Moedwil, on the Selous River, and before reveillé next day De la Rey's men, 1000 strong, having rushed the picket, went straight for the camp. But they met more than their match in quality, and half-an-hour sufficed to send them to the right-about. Kekewich was badly wounded and lost a quarter of his fighting strength; he, however, quickly patched himself up, and a fortnight later was on the track of De la Rey, but a proposed attack concerted with Methuen—who had just driven De la Rey back from Kleinfontein—missed fire.

There was beginning to be an uncomfortable conviction that the end of 1901 would find the Boer chieftains still unaccounted for. Botha was just outside the protected area in the Eastern Transvaal, De Wet in the north-east of the Orange River Colony, and De la Rey in his favourite quarters, the Zwartruggens.

Against De Wet, who had been located near Reitz, Kitchener now directed a drive of fourteen columns; on their arrival at that dreary place on November

12 the troops were perhaps more vexed than surprised to find the bird had flown, though it was chirruping only twenty miles away.

Steyn and De Wet just then indignantly turned down Botha's new suggestion that the British General should be approached on the subject of peace. Both leaders scouted the bare idea, and by the end of November De Wet had scraped together at Blijdschap 1000 burghers who, after giving the go-by to three of Elliot's columns, tucked themselves in the folds of the hills beyond Bethlehem.

Kitchener was not to have a happy Christmas. A British force of less than 1000 men between Harrismith and Bethlehem, covering the construction of the blockhouse line to Kroonstad, was split up into three detachments, too far apart to afford each other effective support. One of these, consisting entirely of Yeomanry, was on Groen Kop, three miles from Rundle's Headquarters. De Wet chose Christmas Eve, a moonlight but cloudy night, to attack them, and by two o'clock next morning had placed himself at the foot of the precipitous side of the Kop. Not until the heads of the storming party actually appeared above the crest was the alarm given. Within an hour the struggle was over, the camp cut up, and De Wet was on his way to the hills with prisoners, guns, and wagons. Kitchener telegraphed on December 26:

> Before the men in camp could get clear of their tents the Boers rushed through, shooting them down as they came out. The officers were shot trying to stem the tide. . . . There was no panic and all did their best; but the Boers were too strong and, once the pickets were overwhelmed, they had all the advantage. Including dead and wounded, about half

the column are now at Eland's River bridge; the remainder are prisoners.

The disaster was the more disturbing as a few days earlier Damant's force had met with misfortune, his advance guard having been outwitted and overborne by a number of Boers dressed in British uniforms.

Kitchener was well aware that these episodes would loom large in the public eye at home, and that —without any striking British success—the gradual grinding down of the enemy was liable to be overlooked. "Oh, for a little luck! but I never get any," he confided to Brodrick. "It is no longer real war out here, but police operations of considerable magnitude to catch various bands of men who resist and do all they can to avoid arrest. The Boers cordially dislike the blockhouse lines."

To Roberts he wrote:

Who would have thought, when you left Johannesburg, that I should be a year in command with the war still going? History repeats itself, and to bring a people under evidently must take time and patience; they evidently are not governed by any common sense, and simply continue a hopeless struggle until they are individually caught. It is through a mistaken idea of patriotism, which results in the ruin of their country. The only good thing about it is that it makes the future more secure. There is no doubt a large number of the Boers have the feeling, "Perish everything, rather than I should be called a traitor!" Many are disgusted at being deceived by their leaders, and fully know that there is only one end possible to the war; and yet they go on, for fear of being branded hereafter as "hands-uppers."

CHAPTER XLIX

Meanwhile the successes scored by Botha had demanded instant counter-action. On November 16 Bruce Hamilton started a sweeping movement with 15,000 men in twelve columns to drive the commandos against the Swaziland border. His immediate aim was to tackle Botha on the high veldt. The Constabulary lines had been pushed forward fifteen miles to a line between Brugspruit and Waterval. With columns supporting his flanks, based on the Delagoa and Natal railways, Hamilton advanced towards Ermelo.

Botha, however, knew to a nicety the movements of his adversary, and having disposed the Transvaal Government in a place of safety, doubled back arm-in-arm with Piet Viljoen to Oshoek, twenty miles west of Ermelo. Hamilton then set himself to secure Botha's laager by one of the new-fashioned and very fruitful night raids. The *modus operandi* was that a party of native scouts were sent out to collect information. Three picked men would visit the Kaffir kraals and learn the latest news. Then the place to attack would be carefully selected. As a rule, the force employed numbered from 1500 to 2000 men, usually without transport, with a couple of guns and ambulance, and with mounted Kaffirs scouting on either flank. Distances up to forty miles were

thus often covered; the desired point was to be reached before dawn. The troops were then rapidly deployed on an extended front, and with the first streak of day rushed the laager. Taken by surprise, and unable to get at their horses, the Boers usually put up their hands, and the affair was quickly over. These successful nocturnal raids were much enjoyed by the British and much resented by the Boers, who never felt sure of a night's rest.

While Benson in this part of the country was undermanned and without a proper base, Hamilton had the call of fresh troops; and the blockhouse line which now connected Ermelo with Standerton and the Natal railway served him well. He took a large handful of prisoners and a quantity of material, but Botha himself got away and, pushing past Pulteney [1] and Plumer, crossed the upper Vaal. Hamilton had no better luck with Viljoen, whom he twice raided; some 200 Boers were accounted for, but Viljoen himself escaped each time and was able to post a troublesome body of 300 men inside the protected area.

On December 13 Kitchener, committing himself for the first time to an approximate date, correctly foretold finality:

> I think about April we shall have pretty well exhausted the Boers and so enclosed them in areas that they will find it very hard to keep up much form of resistance. Of course for some time there may, and probably will, be a few bands of irreconcilables in difficult country, but these will be easily confined to districts. (Kitchener to Roberts, 13.12.01.)

The following week he added:

> There is no doubt the Boers are much depressed in the

1 Later Lieut.-General Sir William Pulteney.

Transvaal and consider the game is up. The leaders still make them stick to it, telling them they have nothing to lose. Formerly they thought we should never be able to catch them all, but now they have changed considerably, and see that the day is not so very far off when there will be practically no Boers in the field. Small matters show the change. The prisoners we took used to refuse to speak to the surrendered burghers and treated them with great disdain; now it is quite the contrary, and they try to curry favour with the "hands-uppers." (Kitchener to Roberts, 20.12.01.)

In the same letter he deprecated the rash attempts to start new farms before the firing had ceased:

I am sorry to see by Reuter that men are being sent out from home to commence cultivation in the Orange River Colony. As I said in a telegram to Brodrick, I consider this premature; already the Boers have swept away Goold-Adams's[1] stock and cultivation more than once. It is merely a gift to the Boers [for us] to go too fast, and nothing I can say will check the civil element in thinking that, because they do not hear guns firing round them, the war is over and everything is safe. When the Boers knock over their projects, they only ask why were they not protected.

We clear the country, and they then put out cattle and cultivation because there are no Boers in sight. Of course the enemy come back and make great capital out of their success. I try and implore people to wait until I can say with moderate safety "Go on," but it is of no use.

Botha was, however, to carry out his bat. Plumer and others not only failed to propel him and his 800 Boers into Hamilton's expectant arms, but in the attempt lost eighty men—taken prisoners. A further drive by Hamilton late in January did force him to take refuge in the Vryheid hills, where for a month

1 Sir H. Goold-Adams.

he was kept on the move; after this he disappeared, and was no more seen until he turned up at the Peace Conference at Pretoria. His authority had of late only just sufficed to keep his men in the field, and he was constantly told either to end the war, or to give some good reason for continuing it. This was an awkward demand, as his chief reason for going on was the forlorn hope either of a weakening of British purpose, or of an eleventh-hour foreign intervention. But Europe stood aloof and Britain stood firm; moreover, the blockhouse line from Standerton to Wonderfontein was now complete and bisected the high veldt, and the three principal centres of the Eastern Transvaal were irrecoverably in British hands.

Piet Viljoen, in the west, was out of immediate reach at Vaal Kop near Bethel, and had succeeded in introducing a party of 200 men into the protected area behind the Constabulary posts. His circumstances, however, were precarious, for the devastated Bethel district was incapable of supporting a force of any importance. He had the choice of three courses —to follow Michael Prinsloo into the protected area, to join Ben Viljoen in the north-east, or to unite with De Wet in the Free State.

These alternatives were discussed among the Boer leaders on January 7, and, after some squabbling, a body of about 400 men threw in their lot with Piet Viljoen and joined Prinsloo on January 24, materially strengthening his position, from which successive attempts to oust him had failed.

In the North-Eastern Transvaal Ben Viljoen and Muller, between whom no love was lost, kept themselves to themselves; the former had his headquarters at Pilgrim's Rest, twenty-five miles north-east

of Lydenburg, with a body of about 900 men, while Muller haunted the hills in the west and south-west of Lydenburg. Neither leader could boil up any offensive spirit in their war-weary contingents.

The Transvaal Government, which had been forced across the Delagoa Bay railway by Bruce Hamilton in December, narrowly escaped capture by Colonel Park, and were then persuaded by Ben Viljoen to take refuge with him. They set out to join him at Pilgrim's Rest, but at first sight of the barbed wire and blockhouses their courage oozed out and they turned back. Their discretion was justified, as Ben Viljoen early on December 26 was caught by a company of the Royal Irish Regiment, and consigned to St. Helena. The official personages evaded further pursuit and crossed to the west of Olifant's River, whence, on March 12, by Kitchener's permission, they joined a conference with Steyn at Kroonstad:

> Ben Viljoen's capture (he did not give himself up) may do some good in the north, but I doubt it having any very great effect, as he has been for some time working for peace, and it will be said he gave himself up. Our party was lying out for Schalk Burger and the Government, who, we thought, were going to see B. Viljoen, instead of which Viljoen went to see them and was caught. I would much sooner have got the Government. (Kitchener to Roberts, 31.1.02.)

The third drive in the Orange River Colony absorbed all available troops, and Piet Viljoen was left undisturbed in the protected area until the end of March, when, during a night raid, Lawley trod on him twenty miles east of Springs, and a ding-dong fight of little consequence and less result ensued.

Bruce Hamilton then took a hand, but Viljoen himself kept clear, while his lieutenant, Alberts, at the head of 500 men, bolted into the Orange River Colony with the British General in panting pursuit.

Notwithstanding the Boers' run of luck, there were signs that their cause was languishing. The men were very jaded, a little out of hand, and increasingly, if stealthily, pacifist. Kitchener in writing home could point to rifts in his opponent's lute:

> There have been constant reports from secret agents that the great majority of the Boers do not intend to go on much beyond the end of the year, owing to want of food and ammunition. We have had such reports before, so I only mention them for what they are worth, which may be very little. From one of De Wet's letters we know Botha wants to arrange to meet De Wet, probably to discuss the future, as Botha's men are very discontented with the way things are going, and at being led by the Orange Free Staters. Ben Viljoen is doing all he can to bring about peace, and his men are anxiously waiting to give up. De Wet's own men are much more discontented and insubordinate than they used to be. At a meeting the other day De Wet had to sjambok one of his men for openly saying "they were being deceived," and asking "how long they were to be kept at this hopeless struggle." There have been several quarrels amongst the Free Staters lately. No one now cares to go down to the Colony, and De Wet has to exert all his influence to get men to attempt it. Kritzinger, after refusing for a long time, has at last been induced to make another attempt, but he has only started with 60 men, though he may gather some more *en route*.

It was a good moment to deliver a shrewd blow.

CHAPTER L

The meshes of the widespread military net were strong, but the Boers were finding them wide enough to permit of parties slipping through by night. Kitchener improved his system, and so approved it that he suggested an analogy for Parliament then assembling. "Your campaign," he wrote to Brodrick, "has now started again, and I hope you will have every success. Let me recommend the blockhouse system; I have no doubt it would have an excellent effect in Parliament; you pin your adversary down to certain areas" (17.1.02).

He now was substituting for the net a thin but continuous wall of mounted troops, fifty or more miles in length; this solid wall, with no gaps through which the enemy could escape, was to move forward by day, and at night every officer and man would be on duty to form a continuous line of pickets. The ends of the wall would rest on blockhouse lines, especially reinforced by fresh battalions of infantry; and it moved towards a similar line, the railways being patrolled by armoured trains. The whole area of the drive was therefore to be fenced in by a living hedge.

The physical disadvantage of the system was that it admitted of no substantial reserves; a really determined force could break through. But the moral

effect was most satisfactory, as the weaker spirits who, in the old-fashioned drives, knew that they could generally escape without being hurt, now found they had to fight for their lives to get out. The new device of course made a searching demand on the discipline and staying powers of the British troops, who had to cover great distances at sustained speed, while preserving the dressing of a fifty or sixty mile line over rough country.

In the first week of February Kitchener directed four columns respectively under Rimington,[1] Elliot, Byng, and Rawlinson against De Wet at Elandskop —9000 men being distributed overnight on a front of fifty-four miles from Frankfurt in the north to Kaffirkop in the south—an allowance of one man to every ten yards. The distance to the railway, about fifty miles, was to be covered in three days and two nights. Writing to Roberts on February 7 Kitchener said: "You can imagine how anxious I am, as, if De Wet is still in to-night, his chances will be small. As far as I can see, the troops are working excellently, keeping touch along the whole line, and we may have a great *coup.*"

But De Wet was not to be among the 300 burghers accounted for that night. Hampered as he was by a herd of cattle from which his people refused to be parted, he succeeded in cutting the wire fence between Kroonstad and Lindley and made good his way to the Doornberg. This drive, if devoid of much material result, accounted for some fine fighting burghers, and De Wet's disciples were beginning to shake

1 Brigadier-General Michael Frederic Rimington. One of his orders ran: "Every man from the Brigadier to the last native to be on duty and to act as sentry for one third of the night." This in addition to a full day's work!

their heads. The experiment was to be renewed on a major scale. A portion of the north-east of the Orange Colony having now been cleared, the new idea was to drive the remainder of the Colony, in addition to a portion of the Transvaal between the Natal railway and the Drakensberg, and the Winburg—Harrismith line. The drive was to be carried out by two distinct movements. Elliot, starting eastwards from Kroonstad and the Doornberg, was to advance with the right of his line resting first on Lindley and next on Harrismith, near which place he was timed to meet the other three columns under Rawlinson, Byng, and Rimington. This phase was to occupy four days, from the 13th to the 16th. The other three commanders, concentrating in the angle formed by the main railway and the Natal railway, were to drive along both banks of the Vaal, and when abreast of Tapel Kop would wheel to the right until they faced south, Elliot then joining in and keeping in line with them. The drive was to end on the southern blockhouse line between Eland's River bridge and Van Riemen's pass. The programme was especially heavy for the northern columns, who would have to face eleven successive nights of outpost duty.

Elliot started on February 13, and, after swinging an abortive blow at De Wet, reached the Wilge River on the 22nd, where he awaited the other columns. The Wilge was now held by the 2nd Leinster Regiment, Elliot's column, and mounted troops from Harrismith. This was too wide a front for the numbers employed, and the northern blockhouse line was also too weak to stem the rush of fugitives from Rawlinson and Byng. A number of Boers had been

driven into the angle before the Wilge River, where, mixed up with De Wet and Steyn and their fighting followers, was a mass of women, children, cattle, and transport. De Wet saw that his best chance was to break through Rawlinson's attenuated line at the point where it was supposed to touch Byng's column. Shortly after sundown a mob of mounted Boers, wagons, and cattle started from Brakfontein on its desperate errand. The 900 combatants led the van; then marched De Wet and Steyn; then came the wagons, followed by an enormous herd of cattle covering several miles of the veldt. The fortunes of De Wet and Steyn were waning, but did not on this occasion forsake them; and at midnight the redoubtable couple poked their way through the British line, leaving women, children, cattle, and a heterogeneous mass of material—besides notabilities such as De Wet's son and secretary—to swell the Harrismith commando and form a bulky prize for their pursuers.

Kitchener, not displeased with this haul, allowed only three days to elapse before beginning his third drive. Two sets of converging columns met just where De Wet and Steyn were in hiding, but although some lurking commandos were broken up, the elusive pair made good their escape and took refuge with De la Rey at Wolmaranstad in the Transvaal. Two more drives, less ambitious because the troops had to be sent to the Transvaal, failed to put salt on De Wet's tail,[1] but unrelenting pressure was evidently telling on the burghers' nerves.

De la Rey's last, most successful, and to him most

1 "I wonder whether *they* will catch De Wet," said Kitchener thirteen years later, when that duty lay with the Transvaal General.

creditable, *coup* was now to be brought off. Methuen was bent on retrieving the valuable convoy captured by De la Rey on February 25, and tried to lick into some sort of shape the miscellaneous human material he was at pains to collect for the purpose. The so-called "column" was indeed a mixed crew; the 1300 men who composed it were drawn from fourteen different units, varying in quality, calibre, moral, and colour. This job lot was further handicapped by a prodigious train of ox and mule wagons.

De la Rey was reported to be making for the Marice River; Methuen thought to intercept him, and told Kekewich to lend a hand from Klerksdorp. Grenfell was accordingly despatched to join Methuen at Roirantjesfontein, seventeen miles south of Lichtenburg, where he arrived on March 7.

Methuen, delayed by scarcity of water, only reached Tweebosch on the 6th; at 3 A.M. on the 7th his ox convoy, escorted by half his force, started, followed by the mule convoy at an interval of an hour. At dawn De la Rey made a sudden pounce from the rear. A panic was started by a native boy with led horses, who galloped through the mule convoy just as it was attempting to close up on the ox convoy in advance. The mounted troops forming the rear screen behaved, and bolted, badly. Some of the Yeomanry honestly tried to stem a rout, but were sucked into the current of it, and there followed the shameful spectacle of a mob of horsemen and mule wagons bumping along at top speed away from their comrades. Major Paris strove in vain to recall the mounted men to their sense and scene of duty. The valour of the British gunners and infantry, and Methuen's own skill and superb personal courage,

were unavailing. The camp was overcome, and of the British surrenders in the war the last and saddest had to be recorded. The bright spots in the sorry picture were the persistent no-surrender of the Northumberland Fusiliers and Loyal North Lancashires, and the chivalrous courtesy of De la Rey to his wounded opponents.

Kitchener wrote to Roberts on March 9:

> Our dark days are on us again: first, the convoy from Wolmaranstad, and now this disaster to Methuen. It is dreadfully sad and will, of course, put off the end of the war. We had got De la Rey's men well down, short of ammunition, and very anxious for the end of the war. Now they are all up again, and we have to begin afresh. . . . I felt a little anxious about Methuen's suggestion that he should march to Lichtenburg with Paris's column, reinforced by mounted men and infantry; but Paris has always done so well, and Methuen was quite confident, that I thought it was all right. I arranged, however, that Grenfell, with a portion of Kekewich's and Von Donop's men, should meet him before he reached Lichtenburg, and co-operate against any Boers in the neighbourhood.

So serious a set-back might well dispel any near prospect of peace. Brodrick rightly warned the country that the struggle might be prolonged and the last stages of its dreary progress be the most difficult. Kitchener had to set his teeth and keep his eyes open to the possibility of another cold-weather campaign. The British public was, not unreasonably, inclined to regard Tweebosch as a discreditable, as well as deplorable, disaster. No one without actual experience of veldt fighting was able to realise that our enormous numerical superiority could not of itself score successes, or even avert defeat, when

against it were ranged the countless advantages enjoyed by adversaries who knew every hole and corner in the country and would traverse it without bag or baggage.

On March 15 Brodrick wrote:

It is, I think, inevitable we should take it very seriously. An utter rout of two columns in ten days, the loss of material and re-arming and equipment of the Boers, the loss of prestige by Methuen's capture, and the misconduct of the mounted troops, seem to us to make it the worst business since Colenso. Moreover, it comes at a very bad time, and shows what a fine fighting spirit still exists in the remaining Boers. (15.3.02.)

He proceeded to impress on Kitchener that the public were insistent on the punishment of those whose carelessness or incompetence was responsible for these mishaps: "People here will stand anything now in the way of men or money, but they will not readily overlook carelessness in a small section of the force, when you and all your officers and ninety-nine out of every hundred men are undergoing immense exertions."

But Kitchener, a strict disciplinarian, was not to be hurried by popular clamour into acts of possible injustice:

I am much obliged [he writes on April 6] for your letter of March 15. I quite agree with you as regards the strict punishment of those officers and men who, by their carelessness, or through other causes, do so much harm; and I consider that this is most necessary for the good of the Army as a whole. One of the great faults in British officers is that they do not look upon their work sufficiently seriously at all times. They are in many cases spasmodic, and do not realise the

serious nature of their responsibilities, and if they do so at one time they easily forget them. Though this is due to some extent to training, it seems to be a national defect, based a good deal on over-confidence. In my opinion, strict punishment is very necessary to impress on officers their very serious duties, but at the same time it does no good to act without the fullest inquiry, and strictly on legal lines. A hasty judgement creates a martyr, and unless Military Law is strictly followed, a sense of injustice having been done is the result.

Military Law requires, in my opinion, considerable alteration to be effective, and to meet cases which have occurred during this war. . . .

It should be solely for the benefit of the Army that examples are made of offenders—not for the gratification of a public opinion demanding a scapegoat:

I am having one officer tried for the loss of the convoy, and six officers tried for Methuen's disaster. These trials probably will result in other trials, as we get at the truth. You may be quite sure I will not let the matter drop, if I have anything to go upon.

CHAPTER LI

On the day Tweebosch was being fought Kitchener was communicating to the Transvaal Government correspondence regarding proposals for peace negotiations. Six weeks earlier Holland had formally offered to mediate between the contending parties. The Netherlands Minister suggested to Lord Lansdowne that the Boer representatives in Holland should repair to South Africa, consult with the leaders, and return with authority in their pockets to determine the conditions of peace. The British Government flatly declined any outside intervention, but agreed to grant a safe-conduct, if required, to the proposed envoys. As, however, these gentlemen would have no influence over their compatriots in the field, and as the last word would certainly lie with Steyn and Schalk Burger, direct communication between Kitchener and the Boer authorities seemed the more expeditious method. Brodrick anyhow had written:

> Our feeling is that any overtures should be made by the Boers in the first instance, and decided here after your consideration and Lord Milner's. (1.2.02.)

An incidental difficulty in the way of negotiations was that the Boers were as wide apart on the veldt as they were in their opinions.

The Acting President of the Transvaal, Schalk Burger, under safe-conduct for himself and his

Government to pass the British lines at Balmoral, arrived at Kroonstad on March 22 to confer with the Free State Government as to drafting peace proposals—to find, as the British troops had so often found, that the Boer leaders were not easy to come by. De Wet was running up and down; Steyn was with De la Rey in the Western Transvaal; Botha was several hundred miles away to the east; Smuts was 600 miles to the west. But Schalk Burger meant business and was willing to wait.

Kitchener was just then telling his Government that everything might turn on laying down a definite period for the grant of self-government in the new Colonies:

> I believe, if two or three years could be fixed, on the understanding that the Boers behave thoroughly well, that it would help greatly. If they come to us and say, "We are beaten—be generous," then I think we should treat them with consideration. None of them like the idea of being handed down to posterity as traitors who gave their country away. (30.3.02.)

But if sympathetic with the policy of reconciliation, he was neither supine nor over-sanguine:

> Of course they have not seen De la Rey, whose attitude, after his recent successes, would not be conducive to peace. I am going all in my power to hit De la Rey hard as soon as possible, and hope soon to succeed.

While, therefore, the Transvaal Government were locating the leaders, Kitchener was inquiring for them in quite another spirit. The recent disasters were the more galling because they threatened to disappoint his hopes of peace, just when he was beginning to feel he had it within his grasp. De la Rey

could not be left triumphant in the Western Transvaal, and to quell him a big effort was to be made. Four picked and powerful columns, making up a force of some 14,000 men, were concentrated in the Western Transvaal based on Klerksdorp. They were, however, badly handicapped for their work, as the only blockhouse lines to help them were those which ran along the Schoom Spruit, thence to Lichtenburg and Mafeking, and along the Vaal. The object was to drive the Boers against these lines: the trouble was that, for the moment, the British, and not De la Rey, were the meat in the sandwich, and the position was only adjusted by a sporting dash of 11,000 mounted men through the commandos on the night of March 23. This force—after a forty-mile ride—deployed at dawn on an arc of ninety miles. But the darkness had produced some disruption of the line, and—bewildered though the Boers were by the scamper of British columns through their midst—De la Rey and Steyn rode out unnoticed; their companion Liebenberg made a sensational escape a few hours later, and three guns and some groups of prisoners were the net return of the nocturnal raid.

Kitchener up to now had directed all movements in the Transvaal and the Orange Colony from Pretoria, corresponding directly and daily with his column leaders, but for the final fighting he contemplated a change. It so happened that General Cookson, one of Walter Kitchener's subordinate commanders, was making a reconnaissance in charge of a fine force—on which Kitchener set special store—made up of Royal Horse Artillery and Mounted Infantry, Canadian Mounted Infantry, and some picked Colonial troops. On March 31 Cookson was sur-

prised, and by a concatenation of misadventures Headquarters was notified that his party had been cut to pieces. The perverse "news," emanating from his brother, dealt Kitchener a heavy blow.[1] For two days the telegraph lines were inoperative, but on the morning of the third day a message was to hand that Cookson had beaten off his assailants and was in touch with his immediate commander. The relief was great, but Kitchener made up his mind that the situation called for unity of command on the spot, and Ian Hamilton was at once despatched to Middelburg to take control of the four columns, to which was added a fifth under Thorneycroft. The Boers, contrary to their usual practice of dispersing before the storm, concentrated their force of 3000 somewhere on the line of the Hart's River. Ian Hamilton ordered Kekewich, Walter Kitchener, and Rawlinson to sweep the country along the Hart's River; then along the Vaal, and finally to Klerksdorp. The movement began on April 10, and was timed to occupy four days, the distance covered to average forty miles a day. De la Rey having left to take part in Peace negotiations, Kemp took over the 2500 Boers who were to make the last stand for independence.

Kekewich, who had reached Roodeval early on April 11, pushed on to the Hart's River. His advance guard at once located a large party of mounted men on the left front, which, until fire was opened, they mistook for a part of Rawlinson's column. In

1 Ian Hamilton wrote of Kitchener that though he was "impassive as a rock in appearance, he was really a bundle of sensitive and highly-strung nerves kept under control 999 hours out of 1000 by an iron will." Somehow this particular blow at this particular moment hit him below the belt. For nearly two days and two nights he scarcely tasted food and would speak to no one except to give actual orders.

reality it was a force of over 1000 Boers under Potgieter, who drove in our advance guard and then made a fine charge across the open. The main body of the British at first made the same mistake. "It must be Rawlinson," every one said, for who would start to gallop across a mile and a half of coverless ground against a force in position? But Boers they were, and with such dash did they come on that they were within 500 yards of their objective before a hurried British deployment could be effected. Even then our 1500 rifles and six guns only emptied saddles without checking the onrush. At 300 yards the line itself faltered, but a brave band, bravely led by Potgieter, still pressed on, and, fighting to a finish, fell behind their leader within 70 yards of the British bayonets. Kekewich and Rawlinson were quickly in pursuit of Kemp, who made good his escape, but left in their hands the much-prized guns which Methuen had lost at Tweebosch.

The encounter, albeit only an episode, was perhaps the most critical of the war, for a Boer success at this moment, however ephemeral, might have spelt the indefinite prolongation of a dreary and desolating struggle.

For two years and a half both sides had stood up manfully to give and take some pretty hard blows, but the direct sequel to Roodeval was the final shaking of hands between Boers and Britons, as Ian Hamilton's subsequent westward drive and some rather desultory movements in the Colony did nothing to harm or hinder the approaching consummation of peace.

CHAPTER LII

Such in brief were some of the activities which for seventeen months Kitchener had from his office at Pretoria directed in person. From the very nature of the campaign it might seem as if our own signal successes in the field had been few in number and never sensational in character, whereas reverses to our arms had been salient features in the operations. But the secret of the ultimate British success lay in the folds of a steadfast continuity of logical purpose, while the "set-backs"—frequent, and fraught with disappointment and disaster as they may have been —were for the most part unavoidable incidents in a long and wearing, but coolly calculated, process, from which there could be no turning aside, and to which there could be but one end. Kitchener's mode of conducting the war was not exempt from unfavourable comment. They were depreciated in some quarters as comparable rather to the working of a machine than to the action of an organism instinct with life—as depending too exclusively on symmetry of plan and punctuality of execution, and as relying too little on spontaneous dash and individual cunning. It was not unusual, while applauding his achievements as a great organiser, to find fault with his tendency to control everything in person—"*Qui trop embrasse*

mal étreint." Granted the ability with which he replaced obsolete methods by an effectively organised system, it was objected that everything was absolutely centralised in himself. Was not his naturally imperious and self-reliant temper given too free play? While his driving power owed much to an iron will, an unflagging industry, an exact memory, a faculty of concentration, was not his position as absolute head of a great military organisation one of exaggerated isolation? The argument was fortified by the fact that up to November 1901 no one had been appointed to succeed to the part which he himself had played to Lord Roberts's lead. Yet his shrewdest critics have owned that his environment, even more than his temperament, was responsible for what was the only workable system.

Self-contained by habit, and perhaps a little contemptuous of convention, he was not the ideal Staff director. He inclined either to trust a man entirely to carry out a special duty without supervision and interference, or else to do it himself.

Thus, at least in two theatres of operations, absolute discretion was given to the leaders. In Cape Colony French [1] was allowed a perfectly free hand, and was enjoined not to ask Pretoria for directions, but only for support when required. The same liberty was accorded to Ian Hamilton, who was tied by no instructions when in charge of the final drive through the Western Transvaal,[1] the only messages

1 He paid a flying visit to French in February 1902, and wrote to Brodrick: "He is quite cheerful about the future of Cape Colony, but no doubt I feel with regard to him very much as you do as regards myself—'With all the troops you have, why in Heaven's name can you not finish it more quickly?' The difficulties only really appear stronger when you are dealing with the troops on the spot yourself: then one realises."

sent him being either congratulatory on his successes, or approbatory of his plans, or mandatory—to go full steam ahead.

Except in one or two special cases the Commander-in-Chief's custom was to see the column commanders whenever he could, and give them minute instructions. Nor was his paternal interest relaxed when they were in the field. Daily they had to cable to him direct; and daily he used to send them direct wires individually, for in concerted, or rather converging, movements of columns there was no recognised rule under which the senior officer took command.

The habit of intervening in current operations—of sending orders, sometimes directly, to a subordinate officer; the occasional descent upon a troubled scene, with as its possible sequel the suppression of a local commander—were methods likely to be frowned on by the old school. But in the field itself there was little protest against them, and there was much to be urged on their behalf. In his silent office, linked up to every post and garrison in the country, and with immediate and intimate knowledge of every turn of events, of every possibility and difficulty, the Commander-in-Chief was perforce a better judge of each situation than his lieutenants on the spot, who, absorbed in the work assigned to him, would be often unaware of conditions which had supervened, and out of touch with the general strategy of the hour.

1 Kitchener's confidence in the Chief of the Staff who had been accredited to him was not confined to work in the field. Ian Hamilton was asked by the Government to write and cable home separately in order that the fullest light might be thrown on the situation. He, however, feeling it impossible to have private communications with the Home Government behind his chief's back, laid before him copies of his cables and also of letters he had written to public personages. Kitchener thanked him for his loyalty, but refused to look at any of the missives.

Strategy, safety, supplies, were all matters so closely and so variably affected by the stream of information, which with a thousand springs had its mouth in Pretoria, that the true direction could be given from nowhere than the central and supreme control. The mobility of the Boers had its counterpart in their quick-wittedness in gathering the intelligence which dictated their mercurial methods. But Kitchener's efforts to improve the machinery for the collection and assimilation of his own intelligence had been entirely successful, and on that intelligence as supplied to him by Colonel Henderson [1] he relied largely, and never in vain, for his own devisings.

His choice of commanders was governed by intuition and personal observation, rather than by written report or reference to the Army List:

> I think it is a good thing to change [commanders] at times without having any serious cause for doing so against the individuals concerned. I judge principally by results, and some commanders, though good in many respects, are not quite sufficiently enterprising to catch the wily Boer at this particular stage of the war. (Kitchener to Roberts, 26.7.01.)

His instinct for detecting merit was unerring; a brief conversation or passing incident would often suffice to reveal to him some valuable qualification or special adaptability, and he seldom failed to inspire officers on whom his eye lighted with his own energy and willingness to accept responsibility. When he required an officer for a special purpose he was, perhaps unduly, indifferent to the branch of the Army from which he drew him, and was thus at times not unreasonably accused of robbing Peter to

1 Later General Sir David Henderson.

pay Paul. But the active, discreet, and often comparatively young men whom he marked out for special employment seldom fell short of his expectation. If they knew that distinction was difficult to win in a school where service was hard and their master's praise scanty, they knew also that they would neither be denied recognition as a reward for success, nor be made scapegoats in the event of failure.

His treatment of officers was the reverse of that sometimes ascribed to him. Slackness and carelessness and "letting things slide" were anathema always, but he was slow to wrath over an error of judgement. So far from being a hard taskmaster, intolerant of failure, his fault—if any—lay in the opposite direction. He himself admitted that he was not fluent in praise, but he was prone to approve, and senior officers and his Staff have even been known to lament his reluctance to "tell off" an offender, and the infrequency with which he did so.

Moreover, he was always anxious to find and record a man's best side,[1] and even when failure necessitated removal he was at pains to report on previous good work or explain that ill-luck had attended well-meant efforts:

24.5.01.—"A" would be better in some other employment; he has lost his nerve.

"B" is not well, but he is not ill—only tired, and should go home for a bit.

"C" does not appear to have done much. I cannot help

1 "It would, I think, be a very good thing if a few brevets and distinguished service medals could be allowed to be given at once for service rendered of a particularly excellent nature. As you know, officers and men are tired, and they do not much believe that good services will be remembered. I asked for some by wire, but have had no answer." (Kitchener to Roberts, March '01.)

thinking he needs a change, and will give it him if I can find some one to replace him.

I am worried about "D." I do not think it will do to leave him in command of a column; yet he has made no serious error, though I have had to criticise his operations. He has not the confidence of officers or men of his column. He is very strict about his horses, which is to his credit, but he does it as a sergeant-major would, and makes himself unnecessarily disagreeable. But if he were a really successful leader in the field, the officers and men would put up with this.

His prejudice, if any, was against officers whose service had been in smooth places—who had always been able to lean up against their seniors.

If you think advisable, pray send "E" out. I personally know nothing of him. His reputation does not seem to point to his being a great success, but I do not put much trust in reputations which have been gained in the street or club, and not in the field.

CHAPTER LIII

KITCHENER'S conduct of the campaign involved a strenuous working day. He was in his office at 6 A.M., before which "operations" and many other telegrams had been opened and filed for his inspection. After a close study of the messages his Staff shifted all the little flags on the map which covered the whole floor, when Chief and Staff on hands and knees would set the positions of 30 or 40 columns on the maps. Kitchener then, telegrams in hand, dictated answers and fresh orders. His immediate grasp of situations which were continually shifting would surprise even those accustomed to be with him. The circumstances of each column were always clear in his mind, the names of their commanders fixed in his memory, and his messages were admittedly models of brevity and clearness.

After breakfast the heads of the Supply, Transport, Railway, and Ordnance Departments filed in, and with the detailed points of the night's cables and of the exact position of the columns in his head, the "Chief" issued orders with unfailing accuracy as to despatch of stores, reinforcements, or other necessaries to whatever place the columns were destined to trek that night. Remounts, Press Censor, Adjutant-General followed in rapid succession, any legal

details of the latter department being a dry morsel for him. A very modest luncheon preceded further interviews with officers from the front, civilian officials, and occasionally press representatives.

At 4 o'clock the Commander-in-Chief usually allowed himself to be taken for a ride, which was supposed to last an hour, but before he had been twenty minutes in the saddle he would fret as to whether some message had come through, and on returning his foot was scarcely out of the stirrup before the intelligence news was demanded. Work went on until dinner, after which his own correspondence, private and official, had to be dealt with.

The arrival of a Chief of the Staff enabled Kitchener to detach himself from his office for visits of inspection, which greatly benefited both him and his men: "I am sure it is a good thing for me, as well as for the troops, that I should personally see them as often as possible; and now that I have Ian Hamilton I can get away without trouble and without stopping continuity of work" (Kitchener to Roberts, 13.12.01).

The control of operations in the field was only a part of Kitchener's cares. Administration claimed his attention unsparingly. During the early phases of the war neglected necessities had to be made good, regardless of cost, and calls for economy were cornered. Kitchener, who always maintained that economy should attend on, and not conflict with, efficiency, determined on reaching Pretoria that expenditure should no longer run riot. His overhauling of local contracts, and later of all purchases for his Army, was drastic, and brought to light much that was unsatisfactory and not a little that was unsavoury.

He thought it well to vest financial control in one individual and secured the services of the Assistant Under-Secretary of State at the War Office, Mr. Fleetwood Wilson, who arrived in South Africa in March 1901. The trained knowledge of the official enabled him to move easily among such diversities as commandeering and the damages done by the troops, the military railway administration in the new Colonies, the extravagance of the Ordnance Department at Cape Town,[1] and the charges for providing specie; to advise competently as to reforms and economies, and to assist in setting up a general control of expenditure—a salutary restriction being that no large purchases or contracts should be made without reference to Headquarters.

After the Army's arrival at Bloemfontein the railway traffic question became acute, and the organisation had been entrusted to the then Chief of the Staff, to whom the building and direction of railways was entirely congenial. The 1310 miles of Boer line which he eventually accomplished stand as an effective pendant to his creation in the Sudan.

When he took over command, he did what he could to adapt his transport to the tactics of the Boers. The first step was to separate the Directorship of Transport from that of Supplies. He then attached to all the larger Commands, Deputy Assistant Adjutant-Generals for transport, with staff officers serving with the columns and in the various districts; and twenty-five workshops and repair depots were formed at different centres. The formation of the Army into a number of columns to meet the new enemy tactics involved the allotment to each column

1 Evidence given before the War Stores Commission.

of its fixed allowance of mule wagons with baggage and two days' rations, besides ox wagons to take six days' supplies. Thus the transport with each column was a complete unit. The organisation of Supply was newly systematised, the whole country being divided into twenty-one districts, each with its depot, from which the smaller stations received their provisions.

The work had been severe and searching—so severe that the workman had now and again felt that he might be obliged to hand over his tools. "I am getting quite worn out," he wrote privately, "but I mean to see it through if the authorities think me competent." He was even prepared to admit that his own supersession in the High Command might be no less beneficial than the subordinate changes which he himself thought it necessary to make: "I was much obliged for your kind telegram saying the Government still had confidence in me. I must say I should not have been surprised if my failure to bring this war to an end had induced the Government to come to a decision that a change was advisable." [1] But the Government had no mind to look elsewhere—not only because they could not lay hand on any one more capable, but because they knew well that if Kitchener's mills ground slowly they ground surely, and that success, if out of sight, was within his reach. His strength and confidence in himself—which never really failed him—were well and wisely sustained by the unswerving support of Roberts and Brodrick. Piqued and disappointed as they sometimes were by the reticence which, as they thought, marked his

1 Kitchener to Brodrick, 8.11.01.

correspondence, no word even of impatient inquiry ever escaped them. As Roberts was his constant champion when military critics—not always experts—gave tongue,[1] so Brodrick stood as his powerful advocate on the rare occasions when Parliament appeared to chafe at delays, or to ignore the peculiar and persistent difficulties which attached to a war of attrition. Perhaps they alone knew how complicated and kaleidoscopic was his task; perhaps they alone recognised not only what he had achieved, but what he had been called upon and competent to prevent.

1 "I wish those who say that the war should be over would come out and show us how to do it." (Kitchener to Roberts.)

CHAPTER LIV

On April 1 Schalk Burger, who for a week had been awaiting the Boer leaders at Kroonstad, received a message from Steyn that Klerksdorp would be a more convenient place for a conference. To Schalk Burger one place was as good as another if only peace could be promoted, and at Klerksdorp on April 9, in company with Botha and De la Rey, who joined him there, he met in conference Steyn, De Wet, Bremner, Olivier, and Hertzog—the last three being active members of Steyn's Government. Thence they sent a message begging Lord Kitchener to meet them in person—time and place to be appointed by him—and listen to direct peace proposals which they were prepared to submit, and "to settle all questions which may arise at once by direct conversation and parley."

Kitchener at once invited them to Pretoria, and on April 12 at his house the representatives unfolded to him their story. Schalk Burger as spokesman professed an ardent desire for peace [1] with honour—attainable, it was thought, by an equitable treatment of six capital points, of which the first was purely

1 On April 11 Kitchener telegraphed: "As far as I can gather, the position is as follows—the Transvaalers are for peace, the Free Staters more or less against."

otiose: (1) All Forts in the Boer States to be dismantled; (2) the Franchise to be settled; (3) the English and the Dutch languages to be employed equally in the Schools; (4) a Customs, Postal, Telegraph, and Railway Union to be established; (5) future differences to be settled by Arbitration and none but subjects of the parties to be arbitrators; (6) an Amnesty to be granted reciprocally.

Steyn, who was evidently a very sick man, hastened to add that, anxious as all were for peace, they were equally set on securing the object for which the people had fought. "Does that mean independence?" asked Kitchener quickly. Steyn nodded an affirmative—"The people must not lose their self-respect." Kitchener suavely suggested that men who had fought so well could never lose their self-respect, and begged his guests to face the real facts and bow to the inevitable, promising to advocate the grant of self-government in the near future.[1]

Both Presidents, however, stuck to their text—that the delegates could not *proprio motu* sign away the people's independence. Kitchener, rather than set an abrupt term to a conversation, consented to submit the six points to the Home Government. The reply was quite friendly, but quite firm:

His Majesty's Government sincerely share the earnest de-

1 He had written home some weeks earlier that the question the Boers would surely ask was—"How long would it be, supposing they behaved loyally, before self-government would be granted to the new Colonies?" He was in favour of giving some guarded indication of the terms, as he anticipated trouble with the natives in the Transvaal, "who," he said, "for two and a half years have seen white men chased by other white men, have suffered considerably, and have got out of hand. The Boers have sold them rifles for food, and are now much afraid of them. . . . If the future self-government is tied up by financial arrangements, I think in two or three years we should be quite safe, with a properly arranged franchise, to give self-government, and it might relieve us of a good deal of trouble to do so."

sire of the Boer representatives, and hope that present negotiations may lead to that result. But we have already stated in clearest terms, and must repeat, that we cannot entertain any proposals which are based on the continued independence of the former Republics which have been formally annexed to the British Crown.

At the second conference on April 14 Kitchener introduced Milner to the delegates, and must have breathed an inward sigh of relief that the official answer was evidently not going to break off negotiations. The Presidents still persisted that only on the basis of independence could they treat; but they suggested that the British Government should put forward its own alternative proposals, and Kitchener again agreed to advise his Government to formulate the terms which they would grant if independence were waived.

Two favours were then asked: that one of the Boer representatives in Europe might be permitted to come back, and that an armistice should be granted for the delegates to consult their burghers. The first request was refused; nor was there to be any suspension of fighting. But Kitchener agreed, by way of compromise, to allow and arrange for the delegates' free access to their people for consultation, and to grant them the free use of the railway and the telegraph. The hands of Milner and Kitchener were helped by the arrival of Chamberlain's despatch agreeing to accept "a general surrender on the terms of the offer made a year before at the Middelburg Conference," and strengthened by the news of Kemp's defeat at Roodeval, Ian Hamilton's despatch, with full details of the enemy's losses com-

ing to hand just at the right moment.[1] The conversations were adjourned to facilitate the assembly of a conference of sixty representative burghers—thirty from each State—to be elected by the people, any commando whose leader should be chosen as a delegate to be immune from attack. The arrangement, without the calling of a military halt, offered some of the advantages of an armistice to the Boers and a little "easy" to ourselves.[2]

Kitchener began to see daylight, and even to assign places to the Boer generals at the forthcoming Coronation ceremony:

It is quite exciting [he wrote to Lady Cranborne] to think that by the 20th of next month we may have peace. It would be such a good thing for all if it came before the Coronation. How I would like to see Botha, De Wet, and De la Rey in the procession; it is quite on the cards, and it would do them a lot of good to see the crowds. (20.4.02.)

On the evening of the 18th the Boer officials left Pretoria. Steyn retired to Wolmaranstad, hoping to nurse himself for the final assembly; the others began the last of their many rides, the weapon in their hands being now a ballot-box. Day by day

1 "The lucky thing was that at that very moment [of the Roodeval victory] the Boer emissaries were in Pretoria consulting Lord K., who has many a time told me that his best persuasive to peace was the laying on the table at their Conference, on April 12, of my second wire announcing the completeness of our victory in the West. The full despatch, with details of the enemy's losses, came to hand in the very nick of time." (Letter from Ian Hamilton.)

2 "I hope you will agree," Kitchener wrote to Roberts, "that I was right to resist an armistice, and at the same time to give them facilities for the meetings they require. I shall keep a close watch on these meetings, and any that are hostile shall have it sharp. A little rest for our men and horses will be a great advantage to us, and give us a really good fresh start if we have to go at it again. I do not mean I am giving up operations—only going a bit slow, and not annoying those that vote solid for peace." (20.4.02.)

for three weeks the voting for the delegates proceeded, but when the elected of the people repaired to the tryst with the Government at Vereeniging, they carried with them mandates so varying in colour and character that the Conference seemed more likely to rise in storm than to close with peace.

In truth, Briton and Boer yearned alike for peace, but between them there still yawned the gulf of the independence question. The last year of toil and struggle had done nothing to relax England's stern resolve, and the patriots were faced with the bitter alternative—either to yield the very object for which they had striven and suffered, or to fight on against an imperturbable and apparently inexhaustible enemy, with the assured prospect, after a prolongation of the agony, of ultimate defeat.

Kitchener knew that there was one stubborn opponent with whom he had to reckon. Steyn was adamant to argument, entreaty, or threat:

> I only fear that Steyn, in his ponderous way, will make a patriotic speech at the meeting and turn them round. He is a head and shoulders above the others, and has great influence, owing to his better education and ability.
>
> On the whole, I think things look well. There is very little doubt that the Transvaal will vote solid for peace. De la Rey was the only doubtful one, and before he went away he said he would go with the majority of the Transvaalers. The Free Staters are doubtful, but they cannot go on alone, and we have so chaffed the Transvaal that they are being led by the nose by the smaller State that I really think they will stick it out this time. (Kitchener to Brodrick, 20.4.02.)

A year ago the Free Staters were bellicose to a man, and the Transvaal had followed their lead—though only half-heartedly and hoping to get better

terms. Now Botha and the Transvaal Government were "solid for peace," but they could not sign away independence without the endorsement of their constituents. The two States, largely under the influence of their leaders, regarded the crisis from different points of view. Steyn, with an exalted sense of his duty to his people, was prepared for its sake to sacrifice himself and everything else. Kitchener bore handsome witness to his pluck:

> Steyn's eyes are bad and he is generally ill. He asked to see a Dutch doctor friend in whom he had confidence. As the doctor was very anxious, for his own purposes, to get the war over, I allowed this, and after examining Steyn he told him that unless he immediately took rest he would die in three weeks. Steyn said, "I know it, but I must give my life for the people." Another doctor was called in, and he gave a similar opinion; but Steyn insisted on going out again. (Kitchener to Brodrick, 20.4.02.)

His uncompromising spirit had been contagious, inflaming not only De Wet and his burghers under arms, but also the long-suffering women, who vehemently encouraged their menfolk to hold out.

Very different was the prevailing tone of the Transvaalers. After Kruger's hasty departure the Transvaal was governed by moderate and practical politicians of the stamp of Botha, Schalk Burger, and Smuts, who had never been wholly wedded to the war policy: they would fight on so long as there was any real chance of success, but were indisposed to sacrifice their people's substantial interests on the altar of sentiment, however lofty. The Transvaalers cherished no illusions. While their cause and that of the Free State were substantially the same, the consequences in the two cases of defeat

had little in common. The Free State had far less at stake in the future, and was taking far fewer risks. She could, of course, lose—and did lose largely in men and money—but was sure in time to recover her former prosperity.

The Transvaalers, on the other hand, had no mind to play the under-dog in their own territory —a disagreeable contingency no longer improbable. They had entered on the war to assert the right of one half of the population to absolute political control over the other half. The continuance of hostilities, however, bade fair in practice to bring about just the opposite. With the re-opening of the mines during the war a stream of Uitlanders had set in, and many more were on their way. This element was now rapidly becoming predominant, being reinforced both by Boers who had surrendered in the early days of the war, and by those who had openly sided with the British. The prudent patriot might well presage that with every week of war he would be placed at a further disadvantage with the British.

On the British side the differences between Kitchener and Milner, though hardly less marked, lay in the respective angles from which they regarded the τέλος of the war. There was no disagreement as to the method of conducting it, but by a curious change of their parts the Statesman was inclined towards stern measures, while the Soldier stood firm for reconciliation. Milner was insistent that British sovereignty in the newly-annexed Colonies must be the bedrock of the British terms. The Boers must be under no illusion as to who had won the war. We must not shelve the

responsibilities we had incurred towards those Boers who had attached themselves to us; their services must be duly rewarded. As for the minority who clung to their tattered banners of defiance, well—*Vae victis!*

Milner held—and was strongly backed in his opinion—that military conquest must precede peace negotiations. By the proclamation of April 1901 the Boer leaders were outlaws; yet two of them, Schalk Burger and Steyn, were permitted to become delegates in the negotiations. This tacit amnesty was enlarged to cover all the members of both Boer Governments—amongst them Botha, De la Rey, De Wet, and Hertzog, outlawed alike in their civil and military capacities! The concessions made on both these points were distasteful to Milner, who objected to the Boer contracting parties being the leaders fresh from the field. He thought an easy attitude was uncalled-for and impolitic. The Boer forces were greatly reduced and daily diminishing; they were faced with a desperate shortage of food and of munitions of war. Our Army was at the zenith of its strength, and our pitiless blockhouse system had been perfected; and this just as the winter dreaded by the Boers was recurring. Surely, with its aid, the end must be at hand. In a word, Milner thought that our accounts with friend and foe must be strictly balanced, and that our bill for damages should be discharged to the last shilling.

Kitchener, looking far ahead, believed that a peace based on the sheer exhaustion of our opponents might for ever preclude any real reconciliation,[1]

1 "Baird, who talks Dutch (though they do not know this), Marker, my aide-de-camp, and Leggett are in constant attendance. The young Boers, of whom there are a considerable number as aides-de-camp, etc., talk

and exclude any amicable incorporation of the Boer nation in the British Empire. We had won a long-contested struggle and it would become us to behave handsomely. A year earlier he had said:

It will be good policy for the future of this country to treat them fairly well, and I hope I may be allowed to do away with anything humiliating to them in the surrender, if it comes off.

And he maintained his opinion to the end:

My views were that, once the Boers gave up their independence and laid down their arms, the main object of the Government was attained, and that the future civil administration would soon heal old sores and bring the people together again.

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rather openly. They say that if no terms are made and they are forced to unconditional surrender they will hold themselves absolutely free to begin again when they get a chance and see England in any difficulty. On the contrary, if terms are arranged and independence is officially given up they will be unable to do so and will join us loyally." (Letter to Mr. Ralli.)

CHAPTER LV

The Cabinet, not unreasonably, declined to fix a date for the introduction of self-government, but, as Brodrick wrote on April 18, was disposed to be conciliatory as to the other two crucial points raised by the Boers. Indeed, the generous amnesty and liberal money grants for the re-settlement of the country might well have huffed some over-susceptible loyalists. The fateful meeting of the two Boer Governments and the sixty delegates took place on May 15 at Vereeniging, on the border of the two States. Relying on Kitchener's promise that commandos which had sent their leaders to the Conference should be immune from attack, the burghers had shrewdly elected as their representatives all their principal commanders. Steyn put in an appearance at the meeting, but, though his courage was as high and his brain as clear as ever, he was too weak and ill to take any active part in the proceedings.

At the outset it seemed as if De Wet had succeeded in blighting the prospects of peace, for the Free State representatives and some of the Northern and Western Transvaalers had received an explicit order to stand fast by their independence. Schalk Burger led off the debate, and was at pains to save time and breath by reminding the Conference that the

British Government would decline to listen to any terms which in the slightest degree implied Boer independence. This did him the more credit, as he must have recognised that he might have to choose between the tragedy of a renewed struggle and the odium of a separate surrender. After the reading of a rather musty letter from the delegates in Europe, Botha rose and shrewdly cut at the root of the war party's case by raising the nice legal question whether the delegates were absolutely tied by their mandates, thus throwing on the Free Staters the responsibility of forcing the Transvaalers to make peace without them. Hertzog, as a judge, declared that in law a delegate's hands could not be tied—that as a plenipotentiary he must have an unfettered discretionary right to follow his own judgement. Smuts agreed with his learned friend, and the solid opinion of the two lawyers made a big dent in the irreconcilables' armour.

Botha at once followed up his advantage by drawing a gloomy picture of the condition of the Transvaal, where, although some districts could still hold out for a few weeks longer, others were already about to touch starvation point.

Of the 11,000 Transvaal burghers in the field nearly 3000 had lost their horses, and their fighting strength had in the last twelve months been reduced by something like 40 per cent. The condition of the women—now no longer under British protection—was pitiable, and the attitude of the natives threatening. The whole situation cried aloud for immediate peace. Smuts, for his part, was fain to say that he definitely despaired of any success in Cape Colony. De Wet spoke tersely but fiercely,

and declared that fighting was as practicable—and therefore as incumbent upon good Free Staters—as it had been a year earlier.

The now rather bewildered delegates, swayed hither and thither by the alternate arguments, were sorely tried in their endeavours to represent conscientiously the views of their respective bodies of constituents. For the rest of the day and throughout the next the debate oscillated, one interesting fact emerging incidentally—the effectiveness of the blockhouse line in hindering inter-communication between the commandos. It was not until the close of the second day that Kemp's and De Wet's invective was effectively countered by Schalk Burger, and the scale turned by Botha and De la Rey. Expanding his old, and expounding some new, arguments, Botha dwelt on the overmastering menace of the blockhouses, the critical stage of the food trouble, the extreme shortage of horses, the enhanced sufferings of the women. The hope of intervention from abroad was as dead as that of internal trouble in Cape Colony, and British determination was as palpable as Boer discontent. De la Rey, whom De Wet with cool effrontery claimed on his side, was no less sagacious in counsel than he had been chivalrous in the field. He knew that with a word he could induce his followers to fight to a finish, but he was too shrewd—and too humane—to utter it. He personally could fight on—such was his contribution to the debate—but the Boer peoples could not. Let them beware lest, if the offer now made were refused, a far worse thing should befall them.

De Wet bitterly taunted the Transvaalers with

abandoning a struggle which they had started and in which they had involved their friends of the Free State. With his fanatic cry of "This is a war of religion" the second day's session broke up.

On the 17th Smuts and Hertzog presented a draft proposal on four points:

(1) Relations with Foreign Powers to be ended;
(2) A British Protectorate to be established;
(3) Swaziland, Witwatersrand, and other territory to be ceded to the British;
(4) A Defensive Alliance to be concluded with Great Britain.

The draft was approved by the delegates, and a Commission, composed of Botha, De la Rey, and De Wet, together with Smuts and Hertzog, was deputed to negotiate at Pretoria with plenary powers to act as seemed best on the spot. On May 19 the Commission submitted to Kitchener and Milner these fresh suggestions, which Smuts and Hertzog endeavoured with ingenious casuistry to represent as not substantially differing from the British terms. Milner pulled them up short with a stern demand for a straight "yes" or "no" to the British proposals, which Smuts wished to consider as only a basis for negotiation. This drew from Kitchener the barbed remark that, supposing the new Boer proposals were granted, they would be at one another's throats before a year was out. At this hectic moment luncheon intervened and afforded an hour for reflection. Before the afternoon conference Smuts had an informal talk with the two Englishmen, from which issued Milner's suggestion that a form of document should be submitted to the burghers for a definite decision. De Wet as a matter of course

was open-mouthed in protest, and a deadlock again threatened. It then occurred to Kitchener that fatal friction might be avoided if the military element were eliminated from the discussion and the settlement entrusted to a purely civil sub-committee. The suggestion was adopted, and the lawyers set to work—Milner, with Solomon at his elbow, was to confer with Smuts and Hertzog as to drafting an acceptable formula approximately on the lines laid down by Botha.

For two long days Milner and his legal adviser matched their wits against the Boer lawyers. A concession was made to Boer sentiment; the new draft provided, not for a declaration of submission, but for a joint treaty, and the Boer signatories were described as acting on behalf of the Republics. To that extent in the preamble the fact of annexation was ignored: but this was more than compensated for by the opening clause, which promised that "the burgher forces in the field will forthwith lay down their arms, handing over all guns, rifles, and munitions of war in their possession or under their control, and desist from any further resistance to the authority of His Majesty King Edward VII., whom they recognise as their lawful Sovereign." The fact of annexation was here fully recognised, and in the second clause the late Republics were simply described as the Transvaal and Orange River Colonies.

Except in minor details, there were only two points in which the new draft differed from the Middelburg terms. The first related to the treatment of the Natal and Cape Colony rebels. The Boers could have no desire to interfere between the British Government and its rebellious subjects, and it was now

settled that the Colonial Governments concerned should deal with the matter.

The second was a more complicated question, and related to the payment of the debts, receipts, and war losses of the late Republics. Kitchener, determined that anyhow the chances of reconciliation should not be vitiated by any haggling over a petty question of cash, telegraphed on May 21:

We have been through deepest waters to-day on a point about which I do not quite agree with the position Milner took up. Article XI., as arranged by Milner, stated that a million would be given for notes issued by the Transvaal during the war; the Free State issued none, and only gave receipts, and was not considered at all when the Middelburg million was settled. All the Commission have expressed themselves most strongly, and said that they would not recommend peace unless we redeem the receipts as well as notes. They consider that, had they raised a loan, they could have paid everything in cash, and we should be responsible;—that their not having done so does not relieve us of the moral responsibility of paying just debts after full investigation before a judicial Commission. They argue that we have taken everything, and therefore left them absolutely no means to redeem receipts which they as officers gave by the authority of their Government, and feel this very deeply as a slur on their honour. If they had anything left they would not ask, but we having taken all, the debts they guaranteed become worthless unless we keep them, and they cannot go back to their people unless this point is conceded.

Milner argues that we are not called upon to pay the expenses of the war waged against us, and that they had brought this on themselves by losing, and that he could not agree to any modification. I tried to get a limit fixed to cover all notes and receipts, and eventually they said three

millions would be sufficient; and, if it was not, they agreed to a *pro rata* reduction. All other points suggested by Milner were agreed to, and the Commission's modification to Article XI. was introduced into the document which is being sent you. I told them that the extra two millions would be probably deducted from the sum to be allowed to re-establish farms, but they did not mind this argument at all, and only wished receipts paid. I judge it is vital to peace to grant this as it stands. Botha, De la Rey, and De Wet all practically said they would not otherwise make peace, and this was written down by their secretaries, and will be known, of course, by all the irreconcilables. If the document is approved by Government as it stands, I think we have every chance of peace quickly.

CHAPTER LVI

The Conference met again on May 28, and the final decision of the British Government was communicated to the Boer delegates. The draft treaty was practically unaltered, except as regards the financial clause, and the insertion of a proviso that persons who had been guilty of acts contrary to the usages of warfare should be tried by court-martial.

The financial clause—to Milner's satisfaction—was relieved of "compensation," and the three millions were now to be described as a "free gift" to be spent by local committees in each district on bringing the Boers back to their homesteads, and on the relief of persons who had been reduced to poverty by war losses—this to include National Scouts who had sided with the British. Milner impressed on the delegates that this document was absolutely final. It had to be submitted to the Convention just as it stood for a direct reply yea or nay. A definite period of three days was allowed for a definite answer to be given—this to expire on the evening of May 31.

Steyn received the Commission in his tent and, before resigning his office of President of the Free State, shot his last bolt in a fierce denunciation of the treaty. The Report of the Commission was then read out to the Convention with the text of the draft treaty. A stream of questions followed the reading, and for two days the discussion dragged on. Kemp

and Muller still held out, but their cooler brethren thought the terms too tempting to be sniffed at, and the Free Staters, turning their backs on De Wet, lent a willing ear to the new conditions. On the morning of the 31st Kitchener telegraphed, "Reports from Vereeniging state that a majority for peace is almost certain."

Yet at that very minute a new cleavage had appeared between the two States. For a moment it looked as if "Pull devil, pull baker," would again be the order of the day, the deputy for part of Bloemfontein—one Nieuhardt—moving the rejection of the British terms, while Piet Viljoen urged their acceptance. But at this tense moment the totally unexpected occurred. De Wet, who in the early morning had been strenuously talked to, and successfully talked over, by Botha and De la Rey, startled everybody by suddenly pronouncing for peace. His conversion was as complete as it was rapid, and at a hurriedly convened meeting in his own tent he hustled all but half-a-dozen "last-ditchers" into voting with the peace majority. The motion was carried at 5.30 P.M. by 54 votes to 6, and Schalk Burger sounded a note of dignity at the obsequies of Boer independence:

> We are standing here at the grave of the two Republics. Much yet remains to be done, although we shall not be able to do it in the official capacities which we have formerly occupied. Let us not draw our hands back from the work which it is our duty to accomplish. Let us ask God to guide us, and to show us how we shall be enabled to keep our nation together. We must be ready to forget and to forgive whenever we meet our brethren. That part of our nation which has proved unfaithful we must not reject.

The commissioners hurried with their priceless

message of peace to Pretoria, and that night Kitchener telegraphed:

The document containing terms of peace was signed here this evening at 10.30 P.M. by all Boer representatives as well as by Milner and myself.

Brodrick added to the official message of thanks some welcome words of his own:

You will have received the telegram expressing the thanks of His Majesty's Government to Lord Milner and you, but I hope I may express the high sense which we entertain of your services throughout the negotiations. The last eighteen months have brought me much emphatic testimony about the confidence with which the Army in South Africa regards you as its Chief, and I am sure you will be glad to hear that the terms of surrender, in framing which you have had such a large share, appear thoroughly acceptable to the Public here. I must also thank you personally for your frank correspondence, and unvarying helpfulness in all our difficulties. (2.6.02.)

I am very grateful for all the rewards that have been showered upon me [Kitchener replied], but really what one feels is the sense of relief and security that no more regrettable incidents will occur. It was the fear of what might happen any minute that made life so unendurable. Thank God, that is all over now, and the end, I am glad to say, is equally well received on both sides. (8.6.02.)

"We are good friends now," said the British General to Botha, with a sigh of satisfaction that the very weary warfare was accomplished: he was thinking perhaps how little had been required for a reconciliation fourteen months ago, and how little had been gained by either side in the interval. Yet it was something to the good that the burghers had come—

however reluctantly—to know, and above all to trust, the man who, twelve years later, was to rouse them again to battle and range them in line with the great armies he himself would call into being.

At no time had Kitchener any idea of approaching the Boers with a corn-bin in one hand and a halter in the other. His main policy had been constructive rather than punitive. He set himself to master in fair fight, so that he might afterwards bring within the liens of a common interest ripening into a common loyalty a whole nation of fiery and faithful patriots. Most certainly he never entertained the theory—characteristically laid down just then by the German Staff—that the total intellectual and material resources of an enemy State must be destroyed. He felt rather that for the Boer Republics the probable alternative to union with England was vassaldom to Germany, and was honestly convinced that a British-Boer union was possible, would redound to the benefit of both Boer and Briton, and would go far to settle the "Black" question. But if political independence was to be taken from the Boers with one hand, it was to be restored to them in a new and more secure form with the other. The change of status from a Republic to a British Dominion would leave democratic freedom untouched and with British insurance added.

"The trial of strength," Sir Bartle Frere had once told Lord Carnarvon,[1] "will surely be forced upon you, and no good will be gained by postponement of it, if only we start with a good cause." The cause for which Kitchener had worked till physical energy was almost exhausted, and nerves strained almost to

1 During the Zulu War, 1879.

snapping point, was neither that of the Kimberley diamond dealer nor that of the Uitlander on the Rand. He looked, and laboured, for a South Africa *pacificata*, a South Africa *amica*, who would harness all her energy to England's efforts in the years when that effort would surely be made. He knew that unconditional surrender and a dictated peace could produce no true amity. He said at Johannesburg:

> There may be individuals amongst our former opponents whose characteristics and methods we do not like or approve of; but, judged as a whole, they are, I maintain, a virile race and an asset of first-rate importance to the British Empire, for whose honour and glory they may I hope before long be fighting side by side with us.

Having fought and won, he sought to bring about a generous peace on the basis of mutual agreement, the only peace which he believed would serve to form an indissoluble bond.

History may be trusted to assign their due to each of the triumvirate responsible for our conduct in South Africa during those three fateful years which opened at Bloemfontein in May 1899 and closed at Pretoria in May 1902. More particularly will military history draw the right distinction between the responsibility of command which Kitchener had to face and that which had confronted Roberts. It seems ungracious to insist, but it is irrefutably true, that the optimistic utterances of the latter before embarking for home tended to obscure the real situation from the country, and that, all unwittingly, the great soldier cheapened his own legacy to his successor. Roberts arrived in England to receive an ovation which was abundantly deserved, but also to foster hopes which were unfortunately premature.

As early as October 1900 Rhodes had told the South African League that military complexities could be disregarded and attention concentrated on the best method of fusing Briton and Boer under our flag. Buller, who still had an immense public following, on his return in November assured us that the Boers no longer had any commander of distinction in the field, and that our troops need only hunt down a few desperadoes. To these *dicta* Roberts's pronouncement a month later in Natal unhappily set his seal. Public opinion was for a time sadly at fault in South Africa as well as at home, although it is certain that to Milner and Kitchener the new—and true—conditions were painfully evident. Kitchener's load was at least as heavy as that which had been laid on his predecessor. Roberts had gone to South Africa the idol of the people, the chosen of the Government, the great leader of men who would surely wipe out the national discredit of previous failure and regild the rather tarnished prestige of our arms. He was to fight battles on the great scale and win spectacular successes with masses of men. Kitchener stepped in when operations in the field could arouse but scant enthusiasm—all the fizz and fun of fighting had evaporated. No room existed for striking achievements; there were to be no more Paardebergs or Mafekings. It only remained to round up a few commandos and wind up a languishing campaign—a duty which Kitchener was expected to carry out, *more suo,* promptly and cheaply. During the next year and a half feeling at home underwent many disappointments; and although confidence in the Commander-in-Chief was never impaired, the process of disillusion as to the war was painful, and the drafts on the

public patience were considerable and constant. But there was also a faction—numerically very weak but vocally very strong—which, bent on misrepresenting Kitchener's actions, construed his measures, born of sheer necessity, into methods of barbarism.

There had always been people who honestly believed that the Boers were in the right; there were political partisans who hated Chamberlain; there were the Irish Nationalists who hated England; there was the type of person known in long after years as Pacifist; and behind all these there may quite conceivably have been an active foreign-fed anti-British propaganda. This combination was able to invoke and exploit the characteristically British sentiment of humanity, holding Kitchener up to odium for the steps which he was forced to take towards finality. Englishmen naturally abhorred the idea of burning homesteads, of cattle-driving, of destroying crops—however well-proven it might be that the Boer farms were at once supply-stores and armouries. Both in Parliament and in the Press the man responsible was denounced as cruel and callous—not only for what he had done, but for what he was erroneously, and sometimes malignantly, alleged to have done.

Here, as always, his admirers, who were many, were his devoted champions; his critics, who were few, detracted little from his fame, nothing from his character. That character stood undimmed by any attempt to cast a slur on it, but the quick sympathy which was in truth one of its chief ingredients was necessarily mated to an unsuspected sensitiveness, and wounds, though unheeded, were never unfelt.

CHAPTER LVII

KITCHENER arrived in Cape Town on June 23, and sailed for home on the *Orotava* the same day. The South African capital gave him a warm welcome, and at a farewell luncheon he put in a strong plea: "Now that peace has come I ask you to put aside all racial feelings, and all Leagues and Bonds, and strive for the welfare of your common Colony." The wholesome advice was taken, and exactly a month later in the same city, and almost in the same words, Louis Botha was emphasising the necessity of Dutch and English working hand in hand. Kitchener's last words in South Africa were a tribute to Milner:

> We all have confidence in Lord Milner. For nearly three years I have worked in close connection with him, and I may say that our old friendship, which existed prior to my going to South Africa, has only been strengthened and increased by the time of stress through which we have passed together.

The day after the *Orotava* had sailed, King Edward underwent a serious operation. The Coronation, which had been fixed for that week, was of necessity postponed, and Kitchener, who arrived in London on July 12, found himself summoned to the King's sick-room to receive the Order of Merit, of which he was one of the original twelve members.

The holding up of the festivities had produced an

air of gloom and anxious expectancy in London; but the holiday crowds, now assured that the King's recovery was only a matter of time, made Kitchener a popular hero. He was accorded the same honours as had been given to Lord Roberts, the Heir Apparent meeting him on his arrival, and as representing the Sovereign entertaining him at luncheon at St. James's Palace. The whole route from Paddington to the Palace was lined by British and Colonial troops, and by representatives of the Indian Army among whom his duties were soon to lie; and the streets were packed by people, anxious to give a cheer to the man who was now recognised as the foremost soldier of the day. And at the Coronation a month later it was his figure, next to that of the King himself, which was most eagerly sought by the mass of onlookers on that sultry 9th of August.

South Africa had not driven Egypt far back in Kitchener's mind. Among the inevitable crowd of addresses and public congratulations which greeted him, one of the first was that from the Borough of Paddington. It happened that the Mayor of the borough for that year was Sir John Aird, whose firm had constructed the Nile barrage at Assuan, and Kitchener's first question as he stepped on to the platform was, "How's the dam?"

And a few weeks later, when presented with the freedom of the Grocers' Company and a gift of cups, he "thought that he would leave the speech-making" to his fellow-guest Mr. Chamberlain, but thanked his hosts for their continued interest in Gordon College, and assured them that the cups would be "useful in India."

There was no chance of escape from the ritual of

public dinners with the ensuing sacrifice of the eminent guest, the most cherished of all our institutions; but the patience of audiences was not tried by long speeches. The *Times* reported him verbatim and in the first person—the final journalistic admission of greatness—but an industrious computation shows that the whole of his public remarks during three months in England occupy less space in that journal than one speech by Lord Rosebery or Mr. Asquith.

But he spoke from his heart at Welshpool on September 7, when he urged on the old soldiers who had fought with him in South Africa "the great importance of not forgetting what you have learnt, and how greatly a man, whatever his spirit and pluck, is handicapped by want of training in a fight. You will therefore realise with me how essential it is that the young men of the country should join the military forces and become trained by those who have reaped experience during this war, so that they may in their turn be ready, if the necessity should arise, to take their places as trained men in the ranks. You must not forget that we shall not always have, nor do we wish to have, a war that lasts long enough to train our men during the campaign."

He spent his short vacation in a round of country-house visits. Powis, Hatfield, Welbeck, Wynyard, Knowsley, Whittingehame—Mr. Balfour had just become Prime Minister—alternated with a shooting trip to County Donegal, and—what appealed to him most—a visit to his maternal home at Aspall.

In these brief weeks of recreation the soldier was learning with his usual painstaking some of those lessons of the social life from which his busy career

abroad had shut him out. He was by no means insensible to its attractions; nor was he one of those uncomfortable guests whom hostesses know too well, who insist on bringing their own preoccupations with them into every house they visit, and who give the impression that the world would stop were they to cease their appointed and burdensome round of business. Kitchener's brain might be working all the time at the military problems of the future, but he gave no indication of it to his fellow-guests; when there was nothing to do, he made no pretence of doing it. He neither loafed nor seemed preoccupied.

But the impressions made on him at this time were permanent. The peaceful charm of English country life and, what is not quite the same thing, of country-house life, appealed to him strongly; and when he left for the East that autumn he had already made up his mind that on his return he would buy a place of his own.

For the rest, apart from his visit to Chatham—"which every Sapper must regard as the home of his youth"—and Liverpool, where he was imperative as to the need of finding employment for discharged soldiers, he spoke as little as possible; and at Welbeck, where he was asked "to say a few words about agriculture" before the local Agricultural Society, he frankly excused himself on the ground that "they knew a great deal more about that than he did."

His last public appearance on this visit was at Liverpool on October 11. His appointment to the office of Commander-in-Chief in India had been published for some weeks, but there were no indications of an immediate departure, and no announcements in the newspapers of the arrangements for that

rather pompous leave-taking traditionally associated with those appointed to high military or administrative command overseas.

The reality was widely different. On the morning of Friday, October 17, twenty minutes before the boat train left Victoria, the railway officials were notified that a compartment which had been booked in the name of Mr. Cook would be occupied by Lord Kitchener. Shortly before the hour of departure, he appeared at the station, accompanied only by two personal friends; there was no retinue of officials and attendants—not even a man-servant—and neither the passengers at Victoria nor the other travellers on the train were aware that this quiet farewell, less ostentatious than that often associated with a family trip to the Riviera or Switzerland, marked the beginning of the new period of military reform in India.

The newspapers, baulked of their legitimate prey, remarked that in Paris two days later Kitchener went to Chantilly races and the theatre, but refused to grant the French correspondents an interview; on October 27, after spending a night in Rome, he landed in Egypt. The next few days were given to an inspection of the Assuan dam, which was traversed in trollies, and a visit to the Sudan, where he opened the Gordon College at Khartum on November 8.

Here indeed, on a subject that lay so near his heart, he spoke at more length than he had ever done in those formal and perhaps rather irksome replies to congratulations in England. He once again emphasised the need of education in the Sudan, and expressed himself fully satisfied with the foundations that had been laid; he remarked that he "could

not expect quicker progress—but was content to wait patiently for the future." Ten years later he had the opportunity of seeing how far his hopes had been justified.

A week later, after the inevitable banquet and garden-party at Cairo, he sailed for India. On the voyage he employed himself usefully in studying Hindustani, and—from the biographer's point of view—lamentably in strewing the Red Sea with the accumulated private correspondence of a quarter of a century. Perhaps he realised that the end of a period in his life had been reached, and he was now to be called upon to occupy his business in the greater waters of statesmanship.

CHAPTER LVIII

KITCHENER was now vested with a command which had been the desire of his heart, and he must see to it that the choice was justified. He had served a good apprenticeship in Palestine and Cyprus, Egypt and the Sudan. His experience of authority during the next twelve years was rich in opportunity for strengthening a strong character and bracing the self-reliance of a public servant who could combine implicit loyalty to his chief with entire willingness to accept responsibility. His mental powers expanded and quickened with constant exercise, and while his companions noted his growth of character, his compatriots at home marked him as the coming man.

As Sirdar of the Egyptian Army he had effectively wrought to a high pitch of perfection some military material of fine quality but of doubtful stability. As ruler of the Sudan, carefully coached by Lord Cromer, he had mastered complex problems of civil government in a non-civilised community. The ordeal had been crucial; he emerged from it famous.

The strenuous years behind him had proved him as a soldier and an administrator—the incident of Fashoda had disclosed the latent qualities of the diplomat.

Much was expected of him in South Africa, where the task was in many ways more difficult, and per-

haps less to his taste, than any imposed upon him. Yet he not only set a satisfactory term to a long and bitter conflict, but sowed a seed of reconciliation which was to germinate and ripen into comradeship in arms in Europe and Africa alike. His work in India was to prove his powers in their full maturity. If in history his name will always be identified primarily with the creation of the new British Armies in the Great War, yet that achievement, for all its marvel and its miracle, was really the triumphant expansion of a military structure about which he had long been busy. And in that structure—solidly built and compacted to ensure the safety of the British Dominion in the stormy years which he saw ahead—a special prominence attaches to the sturdy ramparts he raised in India. As he often said, India was "England's heel of Achilles," and he regarded its military security—next to that of the United Kingdom—as the chief factor in an effective system of Imperial defence.

If Kitchener did much for India, India did much for him. Always a learner, he imbibed there lessons of life which stood him in good stead in the other high posts he was to be called to occupy. His already broad outlook broadened largely. With no diminution of strength or steadfastness his character mellowed; and its apparent hardness, never more than skin deep, was dissipated in the hitherto unexplored interests of life which he at last permitted himself to penetrate and enjoy. Above all, his endeavours to serve England's great Asiatic Dependency were a preparation for and a prelude to his supreme effort to make England herself the dominant military power.

Although to become British Agent at Cairo had for years been his dream, Kitchener had made no secret of his more immediate wish to be posted to the Indian Command. Soon after the victory of Omdurman he was saying to Lord Roberts, "I have let the War Office know that later I should like an Indian billet," and in 1900 his succession to the Command in India was already being canvassed. The Viceroy, Lord Curzon, wrote to him that summer:

I heard the other day privately from home that you are to be our next Commander-in-Chief in India. I know well, from our conversations before I left England, how greatly set your heart has been upon Indian service, and I can truly say that I have not myself been backward in assisting you to realise your ambition.

The Viceroy proffered his hearty support to the prospective Commander-in-Chief, assuring him that the force of his personality would overcome the traditional jealousy between the Indian and the Home Services which every selection for the supreme command was liable to revive:

The Indian Army will regard itself highly complimented by the selection of a soldier of your great reputation as its Chief; and you will before long, by personal visits to all parts of India, and by inspection of all classes of native troops, ingratiate yourself with them and show your personal concern in their welfare.

Nor did he hesitate to admit that it was high time to set the military house in perfect order:

I will not conceal from you that there are many respects in which Army administration in India seems to me capable of great reform, and in regard to which I look forward with

much confidence to the benefit of your vast energy and great experience. I see absurd and uncontrolled expenditure; I observe a lack of method and system; I detect slackness and jobbery; and in some respects I lament a want of fibre and tone. Upon all these matters I shall have many opportunities of speaking to you, and of suggesting abundant openings for your industry and force.

This letter, however, was held back, the "private information" being premature, and the reversion of the Indian Command remaining unsettled. In November [1] Kitchener, before taking over command in South Africa, wired to Mr. Brodrick at the War Office: "Am anxious to get India; can you help?" For the moment the help was withheld. Queen Victoria—well aware that, while Kitchener wanted to get the Indian Command, Mr. Brodrick wanted to get him to the War Office—wrote cryptically on December 14: "Upon the very important question of Lord Kitchener's ultimate employment, here or elsewhere, the Queen thinks it not possible to decide anything yet."

But her Minister wrote more plainly:

I have known for some time that you wish to go to India, and can assure you that, so far as I can assist to serve your wishes in any way, I will try to do so. But there is a very strong feeling, not only in the Cabinet, but outside, that your

1 Some weeks later Roberts wrote to him: "Please wire if you would like to have command of one of the Army Corps. . . . We are going to divide the Home Army into Six Army Corps, and I will keep the Salisbury Plain for you, if you like—always supposing India is an impossibility." (25.1.01.) Kitchener wrote to thank Roberts for this offer, which he felt unable to accept: "When this is over I think I shall require a rest for a while. I have had practically no leave for a very long time, and I think I shall want a thorough change. I do not think, therefore, I should be available for a Command in England, and as the Indian Command is evidently impossible, some more civil work—after a time—would be more what I should look forward to. I daresay I may some day find my way back to Egypt again." (16.2.01.)

presence at the War Office, as soon as you can be spared from South Africa, would give much confidence. . . . The occasion is almost unique. The chance of reorganising the Army is not likely to recur in your lifetime, or mine, under similar conditions. You have the most recent and extended experience of any General in our service, or indeed in the world, of campaigns, since you have been at the centre both of Egyptian and South African expeditions. If you go to India, we should scarcely be able to avail ourselves of your experience at all. . . . If it influences you at all, I may say I have not taken the War Office with a view to half-measures. . . . You may not perhaps always have a Secretary of State who feels as strongly as I do the necessities of the case.

But argument, coaxing, and drab visions of possible unemployment were alike impotent to draw Kitchener a single step towards the War Office. To a friend who had been semi-officially asked to intervene, he wrote:

Wyndham suggests my going to the War Office; I would sooner sweep a crossing. . . . I have no intention of going to the War Office in any capacity; so if India goes to any one else I shall have what I really want—a good long rest; and perhaps it will be the end of my military career. . . . Regarding the work, it is not easy to explain, but I should be a hopeless failure at the War Office, under the existing administration. . . . If I am not fit for India I am not fit for anything else. . . . But, as you say, I must not do what I wish, but what is good for the country. I am quite willing to sacrifice myself if I could do good. I sometimes wish I could get a bullet through my brain, as some of my best friends have had.

For a while the issue lay between India and the Retired List, and after an unbroken spell of thirty years' work the latter prospect was not devoid of

attraction. "You are splendidly indignant," Kitchener wrote from Pretoria to Mr. Ralli in January 1901, "at my wanting a little rest after fifteen years' continuous service, with only my short leaves. Why should a poor fellow like me have no pleasure or no time in his life to himself? But I am afraid I am grumbling again—I didn't mean to."

The magnet of congenial work, however, proved irresistible; he soon returned to the charge, and with better success:

I fully recognise that my lack of experience of India renders it difficult to place me at the head of military affairs there. Still, some Indian officers have told me that they considered it would be an excellent thing for the Indian Army to have some one in command who was not used to Indian routine, and could look at military matters from a larger standpoint than that of India alone.

Also it is not unlikely that before long serious trouble may occur in India, which is really our heel of Achilles, and I had therefore hoped to have the opportunity of gaining sufficient experience to be of use if war broke out. I fear that it was somewhat presumptuous on my part to look forward to the Indian Command; but after Lord Roberts's recommendation I certainly did hope for it.

I feel sure that I am not the man for the War Office, that I should be of very little use, and that I should be a certain failure. This is my personal conviction.[1] If after talking the matter over with Lord Roberts, you feel that my want of experience in India might be overcome, so as not to stand in my way, I know you will do what you can for me. Whatever happens I shall always be grateful to you.

[1] Four years later, when Mr. Brodrick had exchanged the War Office for the Indian Office, and was once again Lord Kitchener's official chief, he resumes the topic in a prophetic vein: "After every one has failed [at the War Office] there will be a call for some one, and you will not be able to avoid the War Office for ever!"

Mr. Brodrick, finding he could not lure his friend to Whitehall, was determined not to lose him for India, and Kitchener could write to him from Pretoria: "Many thanks for the trouble you have taken on my behalf in arranging the Indian Command. I had almost given up hope of ever going to India, and now I feel there is still a chance of doing so, if all goes well out here."

In March 1901 the Viceroy took from his drawer the allocution he had composed eight months before, and in forwarding it exhorted Lord Kitchener in cordial terms not to postpone his coming longer than could be helped. Stress was laid on the fact that 1903 would be the fifth and—as was then supposed, the last—year of the writer's tenure of office, and on the impossibility of crowding into it the necessary concerted efforts. The Viceroy proposed, but events disposed; for South Africa held Kitchener fast till the summer of 1902, and Lord Curzon's final departure from India was postponed till 1905.

CHAPTER LIX

The incoming Commander-in-Chief landed in India on November 28, 1902, in time to act as chief umpire at the Delhi Manœuvres—which impressed him as being curiously unlike war—and to put a few final military touches to the Coronation Durbar which the Viceroy was preparing with meticulous care and on a magnificent scale. "Let me say," the Viceroy had written to him just before he left England, "with what pleasure I am looking forward to the co-operation in Indian government of the foremost soldier in the British Army." Kitchener's name and fame had of course preceded him, but there were sinister auguries that he would be handicapped by his own masterful temperament, no less than by his lack of Indian service. He was believed to have come pledged to carry out "preconceived notions," and to be bent on drastic changes without pausing to learn local conditions.

The criticism was only partly true in form, and wholly misleading in substance. The preconceived notions were that "an efficient army is simply an insurance against national disaster"; that "expenditure of money on an inefficient army can no more be defended than the payment of premiums to an insolvent company"; and that "on sound business principles the efficiency of an army ought to be purchased at the lowest possible price." And, far from

hustling on reforms, Kitchener with characteristic caution looked well about him before pronouncing any opinions—let alone proposing any changes.

Quick to act when the moment for action had come, no one knew better how to play a waiting game. He never dawdled, but he never hurried; and the greater the object in view, the better able he was to exercise patience. Long delays which he judged inevitable left him calm; little delays which he thought avoidable were apt to fret him. Ten laborious years were spent in preparing for the day when Gordon should be avenged. The recurring disappointments incidental to the wearisome winding-up of the South African campaign only stiffened his quiet determination to see it through. But to be held up at a London street crossing was liable to be a provocation; to be detained for a few moments' unnecessary conversation was apt to rank as a real grievance.

A new Commander-in-Chief was bound to form some first impressions. It needed no long Indian experience to perceive how little had been done towards rendering our forces in India, during the critical first year of a campaign, independent of home assistance. It was patent, even to a newcomer, that Army Headquarters were paper-logged with a plethora of correspondence and minute-writing, and its work impeded by the defective co-ordination of departments and the overlapping of their functions. Lord Curzon himself had written to Kitchener before his arrival: "I regard military administration in India as bound up in interminable writing and over-centralisation, from which I have been doing my best to relieve it." And not long after taking up his command Kitchener entirely endorsed this judgement:

I find I have hardly a moment here in this awful system of doing nothing but write Minutes, which apparently makes up the government of India! To get anything done, however small, under the present system is the work of a lifetime; and, as soldiers only hold their billets for five years, the result is evident, and is apparently exactly what the Government of India like. Some of my Minutes are, I fear, getting me disliked, as I cannot help pointing out how absurd the system is. (Letter to a friend, 11.3.03.)

One step had to be taken quickly which, though of a revolutionary character, met with general approval. It had for some time been recognised that many battalions of the Indian Army fell short of the average standard, and that these defects were due to racial shortcomings. The historic cause of this inequality is easily traceable. In the early years of the East India Company's rule constant wars in the Carnatic and the Dekkan gave a "bellyful" of fighting to the Bombay and Madras armies, and warlike adventurers from Upper India were constantly attracted to their ranks. But the conquest of Mysore and the overthrow of the Mahratta power shifted the focus of military activity from the south to the north, and Madras and Bombay soldiers found their occupation only in garrison duty. It came about that their recruits were enlisted from classes remarkable for cleanliness, docility, and aptitude in drill rather than for martial qualities. Meanwhile the conquest of the Punjab and the subsequent occupation of the Trans-Indus territory brought the Bengal Army into contact with the hardy Punjabis and the fierce tribesmen of the North-West Frontier, and incessant military activity afforded the officers opportunities of distinction and a practical training for war which were

denied to their comrades in the other Presidencies. All this tended to damp the zeal and mar the efficiency of the Madras and Bombay armies, and not a little to foster jealousies between them and the Bengal Army. Nor did the post-Mutiny reorganisation of the Indian military system do anything to abate these heart-burnings, and service in the other Presidencies became increasingly unpopular. Young officers who were ambitious, or could wield influence, strained every nerve to be posted to the Bengal Staff Corps, with the result that the Madras and Bombay Staff Corps were always considerably under strength. The amalgamation of the three Staff Corps in 1891, the abolition of the Presidential armies in 1895, and the creation of Four Commands failed to popularise military service in Madras and Bombay, the conditions of which remained unhealthily stagnant.

The position in 1902 was that, though the old Presidential armies were defunct, the traditions and jealousies which had beset them were still very much alive in their successors. In two of the four Commands service was generally very popular. The keenest or best-befriended officers still made their way into Bengal or Punjab regiments, while the less ambitious aspirants or less favoured applicants had to soldier in Bombay or Madras. It was clearly undesirable that certain units of the Indian Army should put on efficiency at the expense of the others; and in preparation for war a sound fighting level throughout the Army was infinitely preferable to a limited number of *corps d'élite*. Kitchener decided in favour of welding together all Indian units; this would entail re-numbering the Native regiments in a uniform series and bringing their peace establishments up to

a uniform strength based on the requirements of the Field Army. He thought to increase the fighting value of the Indian Army by reconstituting nine Madras regiments into Punjabis, and five into Gurkhas, thus furnishing the North-West Frontier with fourteen sound battalions. And although Lord Ampthill, as Governor of Madras, pressed the political objection that the people of Southern India ought not to be deprived of the advantages of military service, he accepted the military counter-argument that "it is a well-known and incontrovertible fact that those natives of India who pass their lives in ease and prosperity, secure from outside incursions and war alarms, do unquestionably lose the qualities that make a good soldier." And by keeping up so many of these regiments, the Indian Government was not only maintaining men with no fighting propensities, but was also ruining the professional zeal and efficiency of their young British officers.

The Government, mindful of the lesson taught by the Mutiny, was alive to the danger of allowing any one element in the Indian Army to preponderate unduly. An increase in the Punjabi infantry had as its necessary sequel a further recruitment of the valuable Gurkha material and the enlistment of more trans-border Pathans in the Frontier Militia, the Prime Minister of Nepal—an enthusiastic admirer of Kitchener—playing up splendidly in netting some 6000 Gurkhas in four years.[1]

[1] Six years later the Maharaja of Nepal, as Marshal of the Nepal Army, was writing to Kitchener: "Your Excellency—The officers and men of the Nepal Army have been greatly elated and consider themselves highly honoured to reckon your Excellency as one of their Generals. They feel proud and elevated at the association of your Excellency's illustrious name with them. I beg on behalf of myself and the other officers of the Nepal Army to present to your Excellency as a token of our sentiments a Nepalese

The unification of the Army, besides securing parity of fighting value in the Native regiments, was also to do away with the persistent designation of regiments by their obsolete "Presidencies"—a custom both confusing and dangerous; one brigade on active service had actually contained three regiments bearing the same number! The new regimental designations indicated the classes or countries from which corps were recruited, mention being no longer made of the former Presidential armies. Such titles as the "1st Bengal Infantry" or the "16th Bombay Infantry" disappeared, and in their place were adopted others, such as "1st Brahmans" or the "116th Mahrattas." Scrupulous care was, moreover, taken in the re-numbering [1] to avoid wounding the *esprit de corps* of the Native regiments; the original numbers—or some association with them—were, whenever possible, retained, while historical titles were preserved and in many cases revived. The associations of regiments with famous leaders were perpetuated by appellations such as "Skinner's Horse," "Outram's Rifles," or "Brownlow's Punjabis," which were added to the new regimental titles. For those Madras battalions who had fought with distinction in past wars was revived the name "Carnatic."

Regulation Helmet with Plumes, as is worn by a General in the Nepalese Army. . . ."

1 "I am glad to say the Viceroy and Military Member both agree in the advisability of re-numbering the Indian Army as a whole. I am anxiously waiting your opinion on the papers Stanley took home before taking further steps. I am now assured if this is carried out I shall have all the Indian Army officers with me, and they will as you know carry with them the views of the Native officers and men. I am therefore in great hopes that this groundwork of organisation of the Indian Army will be sanctioned soon." (Kitchener to Roberts, 12.2.03.)

CHAPTER LX

Underlying all Kitchener's thoughts for the future of India was the bedrock consideration of Defence. He determined to examine for himself her vulnerable side, and before he had been nine months in the country he had traversed the whole of the North-West Frontier. Circumstances had not suggested this feat to any of his predecessors, but to his then physical as well as mental activities the excursion was specially congenial.

In the January of 1903 he made a preliminary inspection of the Tank, Wana, and Bannu sectors, and in February of the Khaibar Pass, Malakand, and Chakdarra. His larger tour was made in two journeys. With a fine contempt for the April heat he started from Nushki—far to the west of the hills round Quetta—and examined every pass and valley of importance from Baluchistan to the Khaibar, the route being by New Chaman, through the Zhob, Gumal, Tochi, and Kuram valleys, to Thal and Kohat. The inspections were in the nature of surprise visits, and the Commander-in-Chief, with only a small escort, penetrated into districts little known to any but Frontier officers.

In August he tackled the northern section, through Gilgit,[1] Chitral, and Killa Drosh, to the lonely

1 From Astok, a small village on the road to Gilgit, Kitchener wired to Hatfield for news of Lord Salisbury, who was gravely ill, and received an answer within four hours.

Shandur, Kilik, and Mintaka Passes, and on to the Pamirs. He wrote to Roberts from Chitral:

We have had a delightful and very interesting tour so far, and I am very glad I came to these parts, and got an idea of the country.

I went through Hunza and over the Mintaka Pass, sleeping one night in China on the Pamirs, and back next day over the Kilik Pass. We had to travel by very bad road over the mountains, as the river was too full to ford. Then back to Gilgit and on here by the same route as Kelly took when he marched to the relief of this place.

We were received to-day with the wildest firing of matchlocks and the mehter's guns, bands, etc., which nearly drove my horse out of its senses.

I start to-morrow for the Dorah Pass, shall then see the troops at Killa Drosh, and back to Gilgit *via* the Bolrogil Pass and the Darcot glacier. I expect to be back at Simla on October 24.

The travelling was strenuous, nearly 1500 miles being covered in sixty days, and only at one place did the party pass two consecutive nights. Many of the excursions had to be made on foot over very rough ground, and this proved to be the last time Kitchener was able to walk any distance without great discomfort.[1] During the tour he had time, while studying frontier problems at first hand, to digest the opinions of the experts to whom he lent a ready ear. He contrived also to sandwich between the tours some useful talks with the Viceroy at Simla, on administrative topics, though he declined to draw up any definite proposals until he had occupied his post for at least a twelvemonth.

1 Four years later he wrote to Lady Salisbury: "I walked ten miles the other day, which is my record since my leg was broken. It was a painful experience, and I could not put my foot to the ground for the next two days, so I am not going to try it again."

His first summer-time in India saw Kitchener's social position happily established. The rumour which depicted him a stern and reckless innovator, prepared to trample on every tradition, was found to be no less fantastic than the picture which portrayed him as a misanthrope and especially a misogynist.[1] A pleasant surprise was in store for Simla, where his appearance was sudden and unexpected. One afternoon "a burly sunburnt man" —as he was sketched—rode quietly in with a solitary companion, and next morning the station woke up to the fact that the Commander-in-Chief had arrived. Military officials made their way to their offices with unwonted punctuality, "a tall stranger riding down to join them there." But outside business hours the Chief was found to be more than amenable to the Simla standard of hospitality. The ink was scarcely dry in his visitors' book before invitations began to flow out. Nor were these confined to a formal dinner-party—the utmost that had been expected; a house-warming in the form of a ball was with characteristic promptitude arranged at Snowdon, and red-coated messengers were busy distributing the coveted cards. The ball made Kitchener's reputation as a host. He was evidently determined that his début in this capacity in India should be a success. He built out new rooms for the occasion, and was known to have thought out every detail and taken infinite personal pains to promote his guests'

1 At a State banquet given in Kitchener's honour at Bhopal by the Begum, his hostess was on the point of reading her address to him from behind a screen in the drawing-room, when Mrs. Bayley, the wife of the Resident, at Kitchener's request, asked Her Highness to come into the dining-room. The Begum readily complied, coming forward and proposing Lord Kitchener's health in the midst of the assembled company. Kitchener replied in a charming little speech (*Pioneer Mail*, April '08).

enjoyment. Those who nervously looked for a rather stand-offish reception were almost startled by the friendly greeting and the evident desire that everybody should have a good time in his house. And the reputed recluse soon showed himself abroad as a highly sociable personality. He was almost daily to be seen driving in a phaeton with a pair of fine English horses, a very smart A.D.C. by his side; and at dances, races, and polo he was a welcome figure, obviously interested in what was going on, and showing no inclination to retire into his official shell.

Here is an opinion expressed of him at Simla that summer:

His hand—the strong hand of one who decides slowly, but, having decided, pushes action surely to its goal, is beginning to appear in minor matters of military administration. He probes everything to the bottom. He is outspoken and gruff, but no one can fail to be impressed by the affection he inspires in those who are in contact with him. He attaches the utmost importance to getting the best men available into every appointment with which he has anything to do, irrespective of everything but efficiency. Formalities he dispenses with; minute writing he abhors. He has instituted a weekly meeting of the heads of the great military departments to reduce inter-secretarial correspondence. He gets through an extraordinary amount of work with probably less writing than any of his predecessors. This enables him to find time to take up long delayed schemes of reorganisation. He is to Lord Curzon what the broadsword is to the rapier. The confidence of the Native Army in him is growing. He is already the most popular man in India.

CHAPTER LXI

A CLOSE study of the Army in India convinced the man charged with its efficiency that much in its existing condition cried aloud for reform; that its disposition, organisation, and methods of training were out of date; and that, though nothing like full value was being obtained from the fine material in his hands, public money was being lavished on objects which were obsolete.

From the India Office itself came the suggestion that the distribution of troops—changed but little since the Mutiny—needed reconsideration. Units were scattered [1] throughout a large number of cantonments, many of which no longer had either strategic or political importance. Regiments and battalions were isolated in small stations, with no opportunity of exercise with other arms; while, even in the larger stations, troops were grouped together with scant regard for the exigencies either of combined training or of mobilisation.

The existing organisation dated only from 1895, when tardy effect was given to the drastic recommendation of the 1879 Commission that the three

1 Kitchener wrote colloquially to Lady Salisbury: "The troops are all higgledy-piggledy over the country without any system or reason whatever. It will take years to get it right, but by working it out thoroughly we shall have a good plan and I hope make no more mistakes" (16.7.03).

Armies of Bengal, Bombay, and Madras should cease to exist as independent bodies, and form a single Army of India organised in four Commands and Districts. By this change unification of the Army was to some extent secured and Presidential control disappeared.

But new conditions quickly arose; Baluchistan had been occupied and added to the Bombay Command, while Upper Burma was absorbed in the Madras Command, although it had no geographical or political connection with Madras, or indeed any other Presidency. Moreover, by important changes in the numbers and composition of the Native Army, and by additions made to the British troops, the relative strengths of the four Commands were rendered even more unequal than when the Commission sat. The partition of the Army into these Commands was therefore no longer administratively convenient, while the march of events had introduced conditions which made it organically defective. The Afghan War had shown that the Army in India was not suitably organised for operations of any magnitude. When Russia in 1883 occupied the Turkoman country, seized Merv, and crept forward towards Herat, India had to prepare herself to speak effectively with an enemy, and the organisation of her military forces was found to be little short of chaotic. It had been recognised that a genuine field force was indispensable, but the numerous mobilisation schemes put forward from time to time to meet this requirement only emphasised, without remedying, the radical unsoundness of the distribution of the Army.

The question of distribution split itself into two main problems:—(1) the Maintenance of the Internal

Security of the Country, and (2) its Protection from External Invasion. These two matters were interdependent, and any scheme for the reorganisation and redistribution of the Army must pay equal regard to both.

Kitchener had first to determine under what system and on what scale the forces in India could be organised for field service. Without this as a standard no military problem could be satisfactorily solved—no military requirement accurately calculated. In the absence of a definite aim or a fixed policy all true military reform would be held up; and until a well-considered and comprehensive scheme were adopted, there must be loss of power and much waste of money on fitful military expenditure.

Accordingly, in November 1903, at the close of his frontier tours, the Commander-in-Chief submitted to the Viceroy-in-Council his scheme for "The Reorganisation and Redistribution of the Army in India." Its essence was the substitution of Two Armies for the existing "Commands." Its main objects were three—(1) to reduce the garrison troops to the minimum essential for the country's internal security, so as to set free the maximum force for service in the field; (2) to introduce a war organisation in which every unit should have its allotted place and be ready for an immediate start on the signal for war; (3) to make the peace formations correspond, as closely as circumstances permitted, with war organisation, so that mobilisation should be smooth and easy.

The question of Internal Defence was treated in personal consultation, and in complete harmony, with

all the local Governments concerned. It was determined by three main considerations—the protection of the chief arteries of communication, the power and resources of a possible armed rebellion, and the amount of help to be expected from the Volunteers, Imperial Service Troops, Frontier Militia, and Police. Due allowance was made for the more modern advantages of railways and telegraphs, and for the unarmed state of the bulk of the population; although the fact was not blinked that certain Native States might require watching. An estimate was made of the respective values of the auxiliary forces named, the *rôle* of the Police being specially taken into account.

The minimum garrisons required for internal security being thus fixed, it was easier to define the principles on which the Army of India should be organised and distributed. The rapid improvement of the Russian communications in Central Asia had altered the situation on the North-West Frontier and the existing Field Army (so-called) was now both insufficient and badly disposed for action. Kitchener's scheme led off with the formation of a Field Army of nine Infantry Divisions instead of four [1]; each Division to have four British to nine Indian battalions, or 3200 British to 6489 Native bayonets. In addition to this infantry force there were to be eight Cavalry Brigades and some extra batteries of corps Artillery.

On one matter of organisation—the abolition of

1 "If India had only the four, or possibly six, Divisions which are at present officially recognised as her Field Army available for service beyond the Frontier, I should not have been so long in forming an opinion; but on investigation I found that in reality she maintained a force sufficient to form no less than nine, and possibly more, Divisions for this purpose." (Kitchener to Roberts, 27.7.03.)

the Mixed Brigade system, and the substitution of Homogeneous Brigades, each composed exclusively of either British or Native battalions—expert opinion was so sharply divided that a decision was postponed pending further consideration, and it was not until the summer of the following year that a Conference convened by the Commander-in-Chief registered its vote.

Kitchener, well assured that his plan was economically as well as strategically sound, was fully alive to the considerable outlay involved, and he freely conceded that its completion should be gradual as funds became available.

The attitude of the Indian Government towards the scheme was benign; the Military Department, while challenging the accuracy of the financial figures, professed itself favourable, and the Viceroy, sharing both the particular doubts and the general approval of the Military Member, praised it as "a statesmanlike attempt to deal with the question on broad lines, and to provide an organisation that should suffice for at least a quarter of a century." Lord Curzon judged it unlikely that "a better or more scientific plan could be produced," and bestowed upon it a comprehensive benediction:

> Its main advantages seem to me that it gives us a war organisation and a peace organisation in the same scheme, the two of course not being identical, but the latter being as closely assimilated to the former as circumstances permit; and that it provides for the co-ordination, in the task of Imperial defence, of all the various armed forces which we possess in India, from the Regular Army to the armed Civil Police.

The Council endorsed the Viceroy's opinion, and the several local Governments were in cheerful agreement as to the adequacy of the precautions designed for internal defence. Finally, on September 1, 1904, the Secretary of State gave it his assent in so far as no new expenditure was entailed, and an Indian Army Order of October 28 laid down the principle that the Army in peace should be organised and trained in the same units of command in which it would take the field.

CHAPTER LXII

In the November of 1903 Kitchener met with an accident from which he never entirely recovered. He was riding alone—a custom against which his A.D.C.'s vainly protested—into Simla from his country house, Wildflower Hall, and the mishap occurred as he was passing through a narrow tunnel in which a row of timber supports left intervening spaces for the protection of foot-passengers. A native suddenly jumped out of one of these alcoves and caused the horse to shy, the General catching his foot in a wooden upright and jamming his spur into the horse's flank. The animal in bounding forward forced the foot right round, and both bones of the leg were fractured just above the ankle. The road was not much frequented, and there was a very painful wait before a passing rickshaw was available for conveying the patient to his quarters, where his limb was set.[1] Yet within a fortnight he was telegraphing to Sir Archibald Hunter, "My leg is doing well, and I trust I may not long delay my pleasure of seeing the Bombay troops." "K. is getting on very quickly," wrote one of his Staff a month after the

1 In 1913, under advice at Cairo, he determined that on his way home he would have the leg rebroken and reset by a German surgeon. Happily circumstances interfered with the visit to Germany, and an examination by a famous English specialist made it clear that the German operation would probably have resulted in gangrene and the loss of the limb.

accident occurred; "he dashes about all over the house on his crutches, and is now talking of going on tour to Madras early in February. It seems rather soon, but I daresay he will."

The grouping of the nine Divisions took permanent shape as and when set forth in the Commander-in-Chief's Memorandum of January 30, 1904, entitled "The Preparation of the Army in India for War"—a sequel to the scheme for Army Reorganisation and Redistribution. In its mature form, as amended in 1906–7, it marked a long stride in decentralisation.

The nine Divisional Commanders were now invested with large independent powers, so as to enable them to dispose locally of all questions except those affecting either the Army as a whole or Divisions other than their own. They were authorised, when really necessary, to correspond direct with Army Headquarters, but expressly enjoined to take the fullest advantage of their new powers. It was impressed on them that an officer who habitually refers for orders questions with which he is himself entitled to deal, shows himself incapable of assuming responsibility, and "therefore wanting in one of the most essential qualifications for higher command." [1]

This devolution of authority placed the Divisional Commanders in direct touch with Headquarters, and the sphere of the Lieutenant-Generals of Armies was rearranged. Disencumbered of other work, they retained their principal duty of training troops for

1 Early in 1905 a Staff Officer was able to write: "One already sees G.O.C.'s of Divisions and Brigades taking upon themselves much greater responsibility than formerly; correspondence is consequently decreasing, and the tendency is for Divisional and Brigade Commanders to settle everything concerning their respective commands themselves."

war, and in fact filled the part of Inspectors-General. The nine Divisions were combined in two groups, of five and four respectively, called the Northern and Southern Armies, each under the Inspectorate of a Lieutenant-General with his Staff.[1]

The training for war of the troops in each Division of course rested with the Generals of Divisions and Brigades. But in a wide area of country there was an obvious necessity for additional supervision and inspection, so as to obtain uniformity in training, discipline, and equipment, and in general preparedness for war. This work was allotted to the two Lieutenant-Generals, who were relieved from the distractions of administrative and financial responsibility.

The twofold grouping of the Divisions was dictated by the strategical dispositions of the Army on the hypothesis of a campaign on the North-West Frontier. In the event of hostilities beyond the Frontier, and in support of our ally the Amir of Afghanistan, the armies in the field could advance by two main routes: (1) from Peshawar to Kabul, and (2) from Quetta to Kandahar, and would operate in two main bodies, with Kabul and Kandahar as their strategic pivots. Hence in peace the troops must be so distributed that the Divisions would be conveniently placed in échelon on the main lines of railway, and that in war they could be rapidly concentrated and transported towards the two main objectives: "It must not be forgotten," Kitchener reminded the Council, "that distance is a factor of comparatively minor im-

1 Kitchener would entirely sink personal feeling where the public service was concerned and a General of marked ability whom he strongly recommended for one of these large commands was a man with whom his own relations in Egypt had been somewhat troubled.

portance in the railway concentration of troops for war. . . . We want to move the troops from unhealthy stations. . . . In order to make the best use of our existing material it is necessary not only to do all in our power to mitigate climatic effects, but also to distribute our available forces so as to secure their efficient training in fighting formations in time of peace.'' The five Divisions lying at the foot of the Himalayas and pointing towards Kabul were the Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Meerut, and Lucknow Divisions —these, with the three independent frontier Brigades of Kohat, Bannu, and Derajat, constituted the Northern Army. On a lower line were the four Divisions pointing towards Kandahar—the Quetta, Mhow, Poona, and Secunderabad Divisions—which, with the garrisons of Burma and Aden, made up the Southern Army. It was inherent in the scheme that the two General Officers who had been answerable for the efficiency of the two armies in peace might expect to command them in war.

The new disposition of the troops, hingeing as it did on possible external developments, provoked a surmise, which Kitchener was at pains to contradict, that he favoured a ''forward'' policy. It was also ascribed to him by certain critics that he intended to mass the greater portion of the Indian Army in great cantonments along the North-West Frontier, without regard either to the requirements of internal defence or to the health and comfort of the troops:

I have seen it stated [he wrote] that we intend to place a large portion of the Indian forces on the North-West Frontier, whilst others seem to be under the impression that the troops are to be collected together in certain great cantonments. Neither of these statements is in any way correct.

The principles on which we have been working are totally different.

The distribution of the Army in India, as it stood before the present changes were introduced, has hardly seen any practical improvements since the days of the Mutiny. The military areas into which the country has hitherto been subdivided have been mere geographical divisions of varied extent, with a different number of troops in each. They were not such that peace formations were in any degree adapted to the requirements of war. The troops for the various Brigades and Divisions of the Field Army had to be drawn from widely separated localities, and from different Commands. They could not be trained together in the tactical formations in which they would be employed in the field, and the numerous administrative details, on which every army must depend for its success and very existence, were extremely complex and unsatisfactory.

These are the reasons which render it necessary to remedy some of the most glaring defects in the disposition of our forces.

The label "Redistribution Scheme" was perhaps thought to imply the massing of troops all along the North-West Frontier in positions whence at the mystic word "mobilisation" they would pour northwards, like greyhounds from the leash. This notion, which caused some shaking of old-fashioned heads, was a chimera. Of massing northwards there was very little. Each Division of three Brigades was simply concentrated in its own administrative area, where its General could lay his hand on every unit as needed for training or for war. Each Division was lodged in proper successive propinquity to its strategic line of railway, ready to meet trouble, external or internal; and each Divisional Commander could make his own arrangements, whether to deal with an emergency in

his Divisional Area, or to reply to a general call northwards.

As a net result of Redistribution and Reorganisation, India was for the first time able, while maintaining an ample garrison, to await without alarm any difficulties arising beyond the frontier, to despatch at short notice two great armies to the vital points of contact with the enemy—the line of the Helmund and the heights above Kabul—and to stand steady for at least a twelvemonth, until Imperial reinforcements from overseas should arrive.

Great as were the strategic [1] advantages of the new order, its administrative and educative value was still greater. Every field division could, on mobilisation, be formed from its own divisional area, and could proceed complete and self-contained to the field of action, leaving the garrison for internal defence at the strength already determined. The nine [2] fully equipped Divisions, each consisting of three Brigades, were estimated to provide approximately 120,000 men in all—as compared with the former four-division system, which had furnished only 70,000 effectives, and these ill-organized and never in complete tactical formation.

Perversely enough, the scheme was subsequently

1 The system was first to be tested in the field in Sir James Willcocks's operations in the Bazar Valley in 1907–8. Mr. Haldane wrote from the War Office on June 3, 1908: "I cannot let longer time pass without writing to you a line of congratulation on the admirable results on the North-West Frontier. The ease and speed with which the machine which you have constructed works, illustrate in a striking fashion the enormous importance of organisation. What happened was possible only after scientific preparation in a high degree. There is no doubt of the effect produced on training by organisation in large units, and I should like to see a pattern corresponding to what you have worked out obtain for all the forces of the Crown. We have it now at home. But we have not yet got it for our overseas force outside India."

2 These were never quite completed, and each Division had only a single Brigade of Artillery.

said to be tainted with over-centralisation, whereas devolution was its fundamental and permeating purpose. Kitchener always insisted that an efficient, well-trained, and well-disciplined army can be acquired only by the organising and training of the troops, as nearly as practicable, in the same formations in peace as will be employed at the outbreak of war, under the same Commanders and with the same Staffs. It was with this aim that the Divisional system was substituted for the previous "Commands" and their subordinate "Districts"; and the change marks a definite acceptance of Devolution, not as a mere temporary expedient, but as a cardinal and constant principle.

The policy was rightly describable as one of decentralisation, in so far as it relieved Headquarters of many details which were rather the concern of the Divisional Commander. The terms "centralisation" and "decentralisation" bore, however, a certain ambiguity. If Kitchener initiated a strengthened centralisation of authority at Headquarters, thus rendering general control and supervision more thorough, he certainly fathered a measure of decentralisation which entrusted more discretion to, and demanded more responsibility from, the subordinate commanders.

CHAPTER LXIII

While the Government of India never averted its eyes from Russian movements which, of geographical necessity, involved India's relations with Afghanistan, the subject was to be closely considered by Mr. Balfour's newly-constituted Imperial Defence Committee.

It was obvious that the protection of the Indian frontier was predominantly a matter of transport and supply. Success would lie with whichever of the two Powers was the better able to mass troops on the decisive spot at the crucial moment, and there maintain them; in a word, everything would turn on rapidity of railway construction.

When Kitchener stepped on the scene, Russia had already developed and strengthened her lines of communication with her Afghan frontier. But the Amir's other great neighbour, India, was hopelessly behind-hand with her strategic railways; her tactical communications were almost entirely lacking; her frontier defences were either inadequate or in embryo.[1] The Prime Minister in the House of Commons in May 1905 cited Kitchener's opinion that during the earlier phases of a war—which, to be conclusive, must needs be prolonged—India ought to

1 Kitchener had written to Lady Salisbury: "In three years Russia may be rapping at our door with a double line of railway, and if in the meantime we have done nothing, we shall deservedly go to the wall. . . . The Curzons have been very kind and the weather is delightful, but I feel no pleasure in life if the Service suffers" (24.7.04).

have available eight divisions of infantry, with a corresponding quota of other arms, in addition to necessary drafts. That this provision would suffice for at least the first twelve months of the war was Mr. Balfour's own anticipation; but he insisted in the strongest terms that we could not without danger tolerate the slightest diminution of those obstacles and difficulties which at present confronted an army invading Afghanistan. Above all, not a single step should be permitted on the part of the Amir which might facilitate the enemy's transport; and any attempt to construct a railway within Afghan territory to connect with the Russian strategic railways should be regarded by us as a directly aggressive act.

I have never suggested [Kitchener wrote] that we are in immediate danger of an attack by Russia, still less do I do so now. What I do want to call attention to is the fact—so conveniently ignored or slurred over by those who regard all talk of danger from Russia as mere panic-mongering—that the problem before us is something more than a mere Indian one, inasmuch as we have solemnly guaranteed the integrity of the Amir's dominions, and have pledged ourselves to defend his frontier. If we are to fulfil our obligations in this respect, what then becomes of the school which regards as impossible all idea of Russian aggression, and points to the intervening five hundred miles of mountainous and sterile country which separates the Russian frontier from ours? By making ourselves responsible for the integrity of the Afghan frontier, that frontier thereupon becomes in a military sense our own.

As part and parcel of his military preparation Kitchener early in 1904 urged anew the cardinal point of the construction of strategic Frontier Railways, which would bring up men and material to

such positions on or beyond the frontier as we might have to occupy.

All authorities were agreed that the strategic front to be held at all costs against Russia was the Kandahar—Ghazni—Kabul line, the two extremities of which were the objectives of India's two newly-constituted Southern and Northern Armies. When Russia was approaching the southern or Kandahar end of our strategic front, we had lavished money on constructing two railway lines to Quetta, and a single line thence to the Sind—Afghan border at Chaman, in the fond hope that it might be stretched to Kandahar. Kitchener advocated a direct line between Bombay and Sind. Till now Baluchistan—isolated by the deserts of Sind and Bikanir—could only be reached from Bombay either by sea, through Karachi, or by land circuitously through the Punjab. It was essential to bring Kandahar within easier reach. Herat, 485 miles distant from our railhead at Chaman, was within 76 miles of the Russian post at Khushk. Kandahar was comparatively close to our frontier at Chaman, where we had stored railway plant for the extension of the line between these two points. A hostile Russia could occupy Herat without hindrance from us; we could of course forestall her in Kandahar; and with the Russians at Herat and the British at Kandahar, the interlying country would be the scene of first blows. But the Chaman —Kandahar extension was indefinitely adjourned, largely because the old Amir was known to frown on it.

Thus, the southern scheme was in suspense; in the north, towards the Kabul end of our strategic front, a scheme had yet to be adopted. Twenty years ear-

lier the Russian advance had been directed chiefly towards the Amir's southern dominions; now the centre of gravity had shifted; the growth of Russian railways and Russian intrigues had brought northern Afghanistan, including the Amir's capital, within the scope of the Muscovite's menace. To protect Kabul against a *coup de main* Kitchener asked for two broad-gauge railways right up to the frontier. One of these—an extension of the Kuram valley line from Kohat with its present narrow-gauge railhead at Thal—he wished to carry to the foot of the Paiwar Kotal, the nearest point on the frontier to Kabul, 95 miles distant. Our troops, railed at this point, could within ten days be inside the Afghan capital; the new line would be invaluable for supplies and would enable us to close our hand on Ghazni, a dozen marches off.

The other broad-gauge line was to run through the Khaibar Pass to a terminus near Loi Dakka, at the eastern end of the Jalalabad valley, where a stock of 100 miles of broad-gauge material would be kept ready for a rapid extension of the railway into Afghan territory. For this, two alternative routes were suggested—one by the Kabul River, the other known as the Loi Shilman—Gakke route, with a terminus at Loi Dakka. The controversy as to the relative merits of the two plans—in which, roughly, civilian opinion was pitted against military—was vehement and voluminous. Kitchener plumped for the Loi Shilman route after prospecting it in company with General Macdonald,[1] who had already surveyed its rival. His

1 General, later Sir J., Macdonald, in a note of June 20, 1919, wrote: "There can be no doubt that the Loi Shilman line, had it been completed as Lord Kitchener wished, and connected with Lundi Kotal by a good military road, or by a light line up the Karu Shilman, would have been of great use in the present trouble with the Afghans."

choice was also that of the Viceroy, who had indeed rejected the Kabul River alignment six years earlier, holding that the military objections to it were insuperable. The Loi Shilman route could easily be carried to Jalalabad, far on the way to the capital. Any demur on the part of the Amir could be easily met by telling him that, without railway access to the Kabul River plain, no adequate help—if and when required—could be given him at Kabul. It was an additional argument that the Kabul River route was exceedingly vulnerable to attack, being in places within 200 yards' range of fire, and would necessitate extensive and expensive protective works. It also presented at least one political objection. Our hold over the powerful Mohmands on the left bank was of the slightest, and we should only be permitted to build our railway in peace by paying blackmail; and even then the line would be at the mercy of any section of the tribe which considered that it had not received its fair share of the spoil.

Kitchener's argument prevailed in the Viceroy's Councils; the Amir also was agreeable, only pleading that the frontier should first be definitely settled; the India Office sanctioned as much of the Khaibar line as was common to the rival routes.

For a few months the matter was at a standstill, until it came under the notice of the next Viceroy, Lord Minto, who, in his keen desire to keep friends with the Amir, was not sure whether the Khaibar line had better be made at all. Amity with the Amir was also the keynote of Kitchener's policy, but he thought that Habibullah's impending visit to India would result in a reliable understanding. He told the Viceroy that, after examining the whole length of the frontier from

Nushki to the Pamirs, he was unable to say where, failing the Kabul—Kandahar line, we should be able with advantage of terrain and the support of the Afghans to withstand a Russian advance.[1] He also reminded him that Afghan anarchy might conceivably render a partition of the country almost compulsory. But behind all contingencies loomed the larger danger never absent from his mind. "I need not," he wrote just then, "enlarge on the ever-present possibility of European complications capable of reacting on our position in the Middle East."

The whole discussion at that time proved abortive, for, after two civil engineers of first-rate importance had given diametrically opposite opinions as to the two lines, strategic railways, on the making of which Kitchener laid such stress, were strangled in their birth by the economical hand of Mr. Morley.[2]

1 Lord Roberts when in India had represented that "nothing will tend so much to pacify the frontier tribesmen as the construction of a railway through their territory."

2 Mr. Morley was raised to the peerage in 1908.

CHAPTER LXIV

The more Kitchener calculated the bearings of Indian Defence the more convinced he was that there existed no accepted programme of military policy in the larger sense. It was indeed commonly, though vaguely, understood that India might some day have to resist Russia and render help to the Amir. But there had been no true grasp of the obligations and responsibilities which might have to be made good by force of arms. Kitchener thought the hour propitious for taking stock of the position, and for defining our military policy: "We have with us," he wrote in July 1905, "a Viceroy who is an acknowledged expert in all that pertains to the Middle Eastern Question"; there was a recently renewed agreement with the Amir; there had just been a momentous declaration on Imperial policy by the Prime Minister.

At the request of the Viceroy the Commander-in-Chief submitted a Note—with special reference to the Frontier—which might assist the Government to arrive at some consistent policy, and define its peace strategy. The Note referred to the unfortunate lack of decision and policy which had so long marked our dealings both with the Afghans and with the tribes on the frontier. It was essential that we should first weigh well our responsibilities; next, examine our resources; and then formulate our policy. "We should

have definite objects in view and a definite goal to work for. Until we have settled on these, we shall never carry the weight and prestige in Asia which are our due; there will always be danger of flabbiness and hesitation in our policy, and certainly there will be inefficiency and waste of public money."

British responsibility for the integrity of the Afghan frontier was Kitchener's keynote, and therefore a Russian advance must be a matter for grave consideration. Recent events had rendered improbable any immediate danger, but Russia must not be thought of as "crippled for a generation." To say that any allusion to a Russian threat was panic-mongering was to ignore our solemn guarantee of the integrity of the Amir's dominions and our pledge to defend his frontiers; and Russia might even hope to re-establish her loss of Asiatic prestige by seizing Northern Afghanistan or Herat—a step which she could take with comparative ease and little risk. A crisis might arise suddenly. A minor local squabble on the Russo-Afghan border might develop into an "incident" and Russia, with a manufactured grievance, might address the British Government as responsible for Afghan external relations. The Amir, politely deaf to our representations, might decline to give compensation or to admit any wrong. If, thereupon, Russia were to notify us of her intention to exact reparation from Afghanistan by force, should we accept the challenge? There would for us be only the suicidal alternative—which Russia might indeed be cynically contemplating—of shirking our responsibilities by a quibble as to the exact nature of our guarantee to the Amir, and leaving him in the lurch. Our prestige in Asia would then evaporate; Russia

would have gained a base some hundreds of miles nearer India, and we should have alienated the ruler and most of the people of Afghanistan.

Kitchener invited his colleagues to ponder well, in the light of all innovations, the chances of an invasion and the means of frustrating it. Russia might move only a few steps at a time—always hoping that we should view her occupation of ground as only temporary; she might consolidate each new position, obtain a succession of jumping-off places, and progressively facilitate any offensive design. Our plain policy was to regard any encroachment—even on the Panjdeh scale—as an act of war to be resisted. Yet under existing conditions we could make no vigorous reply, and might well have to turn a blind eye to foreign aggression from a sense of helplessness to deal with it.

The Note, having indicated the military difficulties, described how these could best be met. To readjust our peace strategy was the first requisite. We had promised more than we could perform. Our diplomacy had outrun our military means to make our pledges good. There must be a frank military understanding with the Amir. The Afghan mood might be a little uncertain, but then the British attitude had not been quite stable. In a sharp conflict of ideas about necessary measures it was difficult to devise any workable plan for joint action. At one time we poured in money and arms; at another we withheld both, because uncertain how they would be used. There was underlying mutual suspicion; suspicion is apt to breed dislike, and dislike may always issue in something much worse.

We should come to definite conclusions with the

Amir, or he and we should part company. The British Government had recently declared that Afghanistan constituted the most important land frontier of the Empire, where might well occur the struggle for the mastery of the Middle East. Let the Amir be positively assured of our reliance on our own arms and that we do not desire a foot of Afghan territory, but that our respective interests could only be preserved either by cordial co-operation or by complete independence. The Amir would probably feel that he could not single-handed resist Russia, even if provided by us with money and arms; and could certainly not rival Japan, who had herself borrowed European methods.

If the Amir should consider that his safety lay in an intimate alliance with ourselves, let defence measures be concerted. India could afford to be liberal as to armaments. But the curtain should be rung down on the farce of a one-sided military alliance; if the Amir should decide to stand out, we should make our own arrangements for the defence of India without further reference to him, and it might remain for us to consider ourselves absolved from all further military responsibility regarding Afghanistan.

Moreover, if Russia, by absorbing Northern Afghanistan, advanced her frontier to the line of the Hindu Kush, we should in self-defence advance our frontiers to the same alignment. Afghanistan would lose her independence, like the Central Asian Khanates and Baluchistan.

The old notion of "a weak and friendly Afghanistan" was very much out-of-date. It was negatived already by the Amir who, largely with our help and

our active connivance, was day by day waxing in strength.[1]

In the second part of the Note Kitchener further outlined the frontier policy for war. Between India and the eventual battle-field was a belt of country inhabited by a hostile and fanatical people, to conciliate whom would be as easy as to fondle a brood of tiger cats. Forty years of alternate coaxing and correction had left these tribes only the more truculent. The presence on our flanks and communications of well-armed and treacherous hordes was a grave risk; and if actual hostilities should occur it might require 50,000 of our best troops to control them. Kitchener had no very sensational or sweeping suggestions to make. He did not even think it necessary to occupy—as had formerly been authoritatively agreed upon—the whole border up to the Durand line. But he did advocate our dealing immediately with that tract of the frontier which, with its command of our two main lines of communication into Afghanistan, formed a real danger-spot should war break out.

The tribes should not be bribed, nor allowed to think we are afraid of them; they should rather see that we intend to control them, and that, if absolutely

1 A Staff officer in India wrote to a friend in England: "Much that has been said of our policy of distrusting the Afghans is absolutely true, and is what Lord K. has urged over and over again, both as regards the Amir, and all the Mullahs and tribal leaders as well. A policy of making use of them, but showing marked distrust, is not only undiplomatic but is absolutely opposed to the simple rules of etiquette as observed by the Pathans and Afghans, whether from a worldly or a religious point of view. Make friends of them, or else make them afraid of you; but don't make use of them when it suits you, and then try to assume a bullying tone which they know is not going to be supported by a *fortiter in re* attitude. Our policy for years has tended to stir up resentment and contempt among the more virile tribesmen, and a doubt of our sincerity and fair dealing among the remainder, which leads them to believe that, however much we may promise protection, it will not be afforded if it does not appear expedient at the moment" (13.8.06).

compelled by their ill-behaviour to enter their district, we should come to stay.

It was not enough, the Note urged, that the tribes should be peaceable in peace time; their quiescence must be proof against the preaching of fanaticism, the greed for plunder, or the rumour of British reverses. To attain this it was certainly not a question of doing them deadly injury, but of extending to them our protection and, if they should expressly ask for it, of incorporating them in the Indian Empire.

The trend of Kitchener's mind as to India's treatment of the Frontier tribes was shown in his recommendations for dealing with the Waziris and the Mahsuds. Our past treatment of the latter had been one long story of failure; many expedients had been tried, but our relations with them had drifted from bad to worse. The Home Government's chief idea seemed to be that raiding parties should be set to do as much damage as possible, with punitive columns to follow them up. But while the Frontier Militia were not equal to punitive operations, a movement of Regular troops in anything like strength might precipitate a Mahsud crisis. In one blockade it had been found necessary to employ, besides the Militia, no less than nineteen Regular battalions, four cavalry regiments, and three batteries of artillery.

Kitchener averred that the present policy offered no hope of a permanent settlement. Nor could anything be less happy than our fitful flirtations—now with the Mullah, now with the Maliks. Lord Curzon in 1902 had justly condemned all recent schemes as "mere patchwork," but had added that "not until the military steam-roller had passed over the country from end to end would there be peace." From the

latter dictum Kitchener dissented, believing the passage of the steam-roller would serve neither humanity nor justice. The innocent would be apt to suffer and the guilty to wriggle out; the political result would be small and transient; our great defensive aim would be in no way forwarded.

The remedy was not to be sought in expectations which promised no final settlement. Perhaps life and property on the Waziristan border were less secure just then than at any other time since our occupation of the Tochi and Gumal valleys. Our own subjects within the administered boundary, as well as the people of the protected areas, were bitterly complaining of our inability to afford them even a moderate measure of security. In default of other measures we had been forced to issue large quantities of modern arms to villagers—a procedure by no means free from peculiar and grave dangers. Meanwhile the sepoys of the Militia had been sorely tried, being unable to move except in large parties; many had been brutally murdered, and one flayed alive and hacked to pieces. Even our Regular troops had for many months endured a bitter experience.

The "Hit-and-Scuttle" method must be abandoned, and a permanent remedy sought in the occupation and administration of the Mahsud territory—a prescription rendered the more necessary by the general unrest in the world of Islam. A rupture with Afghanistan would be followed by the raising of a *jihad,* and a hostile combination against India of the border tribes now outside our control, whose fighting strength was reckoned at 309,000, and who had in three years absorbed 90,000 breech-loading rifles, of which 26,000 had been acquired quite recently. The

Mahsuds alone were 12,000 strong, and their supply of modern arms had multiplied from 2648 rifles in 1908 to 8453 in 1909. The longer just and justifiable action were delayed, the more difficult must it become.

Kitchener advised that the occupation of the Mahsud territory should be carried out at the invitation of the Maliks—an invitation which need not be very difficult to procure. But on no account should the Indian Government preface this move by the injudicious announcement of our intention not to remain in occupation of Mahsud territory, which would alienate many of our friends, and throw the whole tribe into the arms of the Mullah.

He then advocated the framing of a Government declaration on these lines: (1) An expression of regret that, owing to the inability of the Maliks to restrain the lawlessness of certain sections of the tribe,[1] Government had, at the Maliks' own invitation, been compelled to take up arms for the protection of its subjects and the punishment of evil-doers. (2) An announcement that the country was to be permanently occupied, though administered on a tribal basis. (3) An assurance that all peaceful inhabitants should be unmolested, provided they laid down their arms; and that no crops should be destroyed or villages burnt, unless active opposition were offered. (4) A promise to the tribesmen of opportunities of future service in the army, militia, and

1 A General Officer wrote home: "As to frontier outrages, some of the questions in the House are nothing but incentives to fanatics in India to murder the first white man they see, and all of them are reproduced in the inflammatory native Press with their own remarks thereon. If these frontier outrages are to continue unpunished, the life of a British officer will be considered on the frontier as of less value than that of a dog in the eyes of our people" (5.7.06).

levies, when the country had peacefully settled down. (5) An order for their complete disarmament, coupled with an assurance of protection against outside raiders. And, as a *bonne bouche,* it was suggested that a settlement on these lines need take but little time and cost but little cash.

CHAPTER LXV

In 1897 the Government of India had decided to substitute locally-recruited Militia corps for Regulars in all posts held by our troops in the tribal country lying between the old administrative border and the Durand line. The custody of the Khaibar was given to the Khaibar Rifles, and the Kuram and North and South Waziristan were to be guarded, each by its own Militia. It was judged prudent, however, in the Samana and Zhob valleys, to retain garrisons of Regulars as a support to the Militia. Kitchener agreed, both as to the general futility of locking up Regular troops in isolated advanced posts, and as to the exception of the Samana and the Zhob; deeming it most unwise to withdraw reliable soldiers from these valleys, or even from North and South Waziristan, at any rate until the fitness and fidelity of the Militia had been thoroughly tested.

In his tour of the frontier from Chaman to Chitral in 1903 the Commander-in-Chief was favourably impressed by the quality and efficiency of the force there; but he thought it a mistake that their numbers should barely suffice to man the works:

> The tribes know to a man the strength of these detached garrisons, and it would greatly add to the strength of the posts and the prestige of Government in these districts if they were not reduced to the absolute limits necessary to man the perimeter of the works.

He recommended such an increase as would enable the Militia, in the event of an outbreak, to police the country, and the recommendation was put into effect, as far as it was possible to obtain serviceable recruits. The behaviour of the Waziri tribesmen had been the reverse of exemplary, and various acts of misconduct having culminated in a murderous attack by Sepoy Ghazis on their own British officers, it was found necessary to leaven the corps with Pathans of non-local tribes.

Proposals were just then put forward in Council to withdraw the Regular troops from the Samana and to hand over Fort Lockhart to the Samana Rifles. Kitchener voiced military opinion in a strong protest, pointing out that on the Samana we dominated the border-line between our territory and the Orakzais, who grumbled openly at our tenure of the ridge, which they ardently coveted and coolly claimed. As he reminded his civilian colleagues, a hostile tribal force would be restrained from attacking the railway or entering our territory by the chastening reflection that the only route would leave Fort Lockhart in their rear, and that the British garrison could easily cut off their retreat. Moreover, if the fort, entrusted to a Militia garrison, were lost by misadventure or treachery, its recapture might prove difficult and expensive. His argument was stiffened by the unrest already evident among the Afridis, which was to compel the Zakka Khel expedition of 1908.[1] Obviously the moment was peculiarly unsuitable for

1 Lord Minto then wrote to Lord Morley: "Kitchener is the very essence of caution as regards the frontier. I know no one more anxious to avoid frontier expeditions, partly no doubt because he knows that with the vastly improved armaments of the tribes one on a big scale would be a very serious affair." (23.3.08.)

taking liberties with a not too stable military position.

The withdrawal of the Regulars from Samana seemed, however, to have a special fascination for the Viceroy, who two years later returned to his point. He was then at the pains to represent to his Council that six years ago the Samana Rifles had been raised, with the consent of Sir William Lockhart, for the express purpose of taking over the post; but he seemed to have forgotten that Lockhart's consent was contingent on a body of British troops being permanently cantoned in the Miranzai valley —a condition which had never been fulfilled. Kitchener, backed on this occasion by all the Members of Council, was fain to withstand the Viceroy once more. He believed that the question, trivial as it might seem superficially, involved, not only the loyal performance of our obligations to the Amir, but even the defence of India itself:

> If we are to hope to carry out our obligations satisfactorily, there must be no possible shadow of doubt regarding the absolute safety of our communications on both the Khaibar and the Kuram lines of advance. The former line is not now under discussion. I will therefore confine myself to the question of the Kuram.
>
> For something like a hundred miles of its length the Kuram line of communications is flanked on the north by tribal territory. Our occupation of the Samana I regard as at all times a valuable guarantee for the preservation of reasonable security, and in time of war such occupation would be vitally essential. We have now held the ridge for many years. Any feelings of irritation at what the tribes doubtless at first regarded as our aggression must by now have passed away, and even if they had not I should not allow them to weigh against the much more important reasons in

favour of our retaining command of the Samana by means of regular troops. I gather that even the most enthusiastic supporters of the project to depend solely on the militia will not tell us that there is no risk. There is risk, and considerable risk, and so long as this is the case I cannot agree to take any chances where issues so important are at stake. If once we lost hold of the Samana through the defection or the unreliability of the militia, we could only take it at considerable loss, and its recapture would be but the beginning of a formidable frontier war which we all desire to avoid. So long as we retain regular troops there, the temptation of the tribes to rise and take the Samana will remain at a minimum.

His Excellency remarks, justly enough, that he has been unable so far to put the finishing touch on the policy initiated six years ago because each year some new reason or excuse has been put forward by the military authorities against it. . . . I do not think that I will be held to have obstructed this matter merely in order to provide the ladies of the Kohat garrison with a hill station. On the contrary, I am so keenly in sympathy with His Excellency's frontier policy as a whole in this respect, that I would gladly have assisted its final completion had I seen my way conscientiously to do so. But the more I have studied this question—which is, after all, but a small part of a much larger question with which it is intimately bound up—the more convinced I am that, on military grounds, it would be a grave mistake to withdraw the Regular troops from the Samana. I recognise that it is unadvisable that the question should be hung up indefinitely any longer. It should be decided one way or the other at once. I can only record my opinion against the proposed withdrawal. (3.7.05.)

Lord Curzon, finding himself in a minority of one, was constrained to yield, although clinging to his own unwavering opinion, and expressing the hope

that the "military advisers of Government would change their view before long."

The formation of reserves for certain frontier militia corps was the subject of a proposal put forward in 1905 by Sir Harold Deane, the Agent to the Governor-General in the North-West Frontier Province. The Viceroy smiled on the suggestion and referred it to Kitchener, who fully agreed but seized the opportunity to suggest a healthy modification in the terms of service:

I am very strongly in favour of the principle of creating a reserve for our militia forces on the frontier. At present we train these tribesmen as soldiers, but instead of retaining a claim on their services as reservists—as we do in the case of Regular troops—we allow them, after a term of service which is usually short, to return to their villages in independent country, where we have no hold on them whatever. It is evident that we are thus forming a trained body of men among these tribes, who would only want a capable and dashing leader to become a most dangerous factor in any acute trouble between Government and the tribes, or in any period of serious friction between ourselves and the Amir of Afghanistan, whose preponderating influence over the tribes is notorious.

I think, however, that it is quite possible in time to bring about an improvement in our relations with these tribes by gradually and peacefully extending to them the influence of the great Indian Empire in the borders of these comparatively small districts, by creating a feeling of confidence in us, instead of the suspicion in which we are now held, by opening to them sources of trade and profit, and by showing them, by every means in our power, that it is to their interest to join hands with us and become a loyal part of the Indian Raj. (26.9.05.)

The contention, though it countered the original

terms of enlistment, was well grounded. Kitchener held that, in order to secure the maximum value from the militia, and at the same time minimise their possibilities for harm, their obligations should extend, in case of war, to services anywhere in the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind, or Baluchistan; and that they should be liable to come under the ordinary military code of the Indian Army. This proved to be the last military point on which Lord Curzon differed from military opinion; his successor in office asked Deane to submit fresh proposals, the result being the adoption of the Commander-in-Chief's recommendation—sweetened by the grant of pensions to the various militias.

CHAPTER LXVI

KITCHENER'S purpose to secure a general preparedness for war was backed by the keen sense of a particular war impending in the near future. Hence the significance of a discussion at the Simla Conference of Lieutenant-Generals held in June 1905, on the advantages of Homogeneous Brigades, composed wholly either of British or of Native battalions, as compared with Mixed Brigades made up partly of British and partly of Native battalions. For tribal warfare on the frontier the Mixed Brigade had arguable advantages; but for a prospective war, in which nine divisions might take the field, Homogeneous Brigades would be easier to supply and administer, and so to manœuvre.

Experience had shown that under the Mixed Brigade system square men had not infrequently been put into round holes and *vice versa.* To Native troops had been allotted tasks which called for the parade-ground steadiness and perhaps for the lack of imagination peculiarly characteristic of British troops,[1] and the converse was illustrated when, on the march, physical difficulties of ground were as formidable to the British as they were easily negotiable for

1 Kitchener used to say that the lack of imagination with which the British soldier is sometimes twitted is a characteristic which at any rate prevents the possibility of defeat occurring to him.

the Indian soldiers. The objection which was put out that the formation of racial brigades might constitute a political danger was met by the simple reply that class brigades were not under contemplation.

Kitchener wrote to Roberts from Mandalay (December 4, 1904):

I hear unofficially that the India Office is making some difficulty about my proposed Brigade formation for Mixed Divisions in case of war. Of course this does not apply to small wars, where Mixed Brigades of British and Native troops could be used; but in a big war, with seven or nine Divisions in the field, it would be, for supply and transport reasons, impossible to employ Mixed Brigades. It is merely a question of proportion; when you have large forces in the field the Brigade is no more than the Regiment in small wars; and consequently, if you have the proportion of British troops in the Division it is practically the same, and far handier to use them. I do not, of course, intend that British troops are to be separated from Native. They will be trained with Native troops, and fight in all small wars as Mixed Brigades; but when we mobilise for the big war the Division will be the unit. I enclose an Allotment for Mobilisation which has gone out, and which will show you what can be done.

The Government of India pressed this reform at home, and it received the necessary sanction.

The self-contained unit for war—in India as throughout the Empire—was to be the Division. In case of foreign complications the equivalent of eight Divisions would be despatched from home, when the Division—as a ready-made unit in India—would provide a framework into which British Brigades could be comfortably and conveniently fitted. Under

the Divisional system the British soldier would also be better and more easily supplied; and Kitchener, knowing how entirely Roberts would share his solicitude for the soldier in the field, appealed to him:

> I think every Division is a really good fighting force, and I certainly should not care for the responsibility of taking the Army into the field if the British troops were further broken up. You know what "Tommy" is—if he does not get his food he won't fight; and I see no possibility of his doing so if he is scattered through numerous brigades. I hope you will agree with my view. We can work in the reinforcements from England quite easily with this system.

As the Division was the unit fixed upon for war, so it was to be the school for the training of all three Arms; Divisions and Brigades were, if possible, to consist of the units which would be associated on active service. Devolution being of the essence of the new order, General Officers Commanding Divisions and independent Brigades were desired to draw up their own annual training programmes and submit them for the information of the Commanders of the two Armies and of the Chief of the Staff. General directions, issued from Army Headquarters, provided for a strenuous and searching course; but climatic conditions were so diverse, and garrison duties so multifarious, that the Divisional Commanders were left to lay down their own courses of training. A scarcely less arduous period was to be devoted to regimental competitions, rifle meetings, and preparations for assaults-at-arms; but training was on no account to interfere with normal leave and furlough.

The new War Division, complete with its divisional troops precisely as it would take the field, made a fine first appearance at the Rawal-Pindi manœuvres held

in honour of the Prince and Princess of Wales in December 1905.[1] Each infantry Division went by in Brigades, presenting a front of nearly 200 yards. The Divisional Cavalry and Horse Artillery marched on the outer flanks in mass, the Field Artillery being in column of batteries. The *Pioneer Mail* was moved to glowing periods:

> One saw a mass of men moving in what may be compared to a forest of bayonets, save where the Rifle regiments were placed, and the regimental colours rose above the helmets and turbans to mark the position of this or that regiment. Squads of scarlet, khaki, or rifle-green moved slowly past, and the impression made by this mass of infantry will long be remembered by all who saw the review.

To the training of the troops in their new formations and localities and under the new conditions, the Commander-in-Chief brought to bear, not his "preconceived notions" but his abundant and varied experience. He knew—no one better—that the qualities nowadays required in the soldier were individuality and initiative, and in South Africa he had marked with satisfaction the willingness of junior officers and non-commissioned officers to accept responsibility. The worst type of officer, in his judgement, was the man who considered his duty done when he had reported a difficulty to his next senior.

He laid down[2] that for the Indian soldier, less instructed than his British brother, it is peculiarly necessary to encourage his intelligence and initiative

1 To Lady Salisbury: "The Prince and Princess have nearly finished their tour. It has been a great success and they have made themselves very popular. Very many thanks for the bridge markers. They will be very useful, as I never had anything of the sort. I am not a player myself, but the Staff and guests play." (14.12.05.)

2 Memorandum of April 1904.

up to the limits imposed by discipline. This individual training was, above all, to be thorough. The native soldier readily acquires a soldierly bearing and picks up his drill; but under emergency—especially if bereft of his British officer—he is often predisposed to helplessness, and needs special tutoring to meet the unforeseen. Officers and non-commissioned officers were to qualify for independent command in the field, and a beginning must be made at the bottom of the scale, constant opportunities for its exercise being afforded even to the youngest subaltern.

Mistakes will of course be made. But neither the young officer nor the rising non-commissioned officer should be discouraged by constant and sometimes harassing corrections. They should be allowed to carry out their plans, each in his own way, to their legitimate conclusion, so that they can see their mistakes for themselves; and then, if necessary, the superintending officer can with greater advantage point out any errors which have been made, explain their causes, and show how they may be avoided in future. Such a method of instruction, while impressing its lessons more vividly on the young officer and those around him, is the best insurance against their making similar mistakes in war. On the other hand, if a young officer or non-commissioned officer is sharply corrected as soon as he begins to make a mistake, he not only loses the benefit—so invaluable to himself and others—of seeing his errors and how they arose, but also that independence of thought and action, which it is our aim and object to foster and develop, receives a check from which it is slow to recover.

It was specially enjoined that an officer's education should not be restricted to his own branch of the service. No opportunity was to be missed of working

the three Arms together, and Commanding Officers were at first a little dismayed at being told that they "should always be ready, by mutual agreement, to place portions of their units at each other's disposal."

The nemesis of neglect of training was illustrated from recent history, certain unpleasant occasions being recalled when failure was directly traceable to an overweening confidence and a readiness to accept the placid theory that the British Army, even if imperfectly trained, can deal with any enemy it is likely to meet. The moral was sharply drawn that to shirk real preparation for war was to court disaster.

There are many cases to show that from such soothing beliefs there may be a rude awakening. In the day of battle a Commander may find that his troops are not so well trained as he has fondly imagined, and that his Staff itself leaves something to be desired; that the whole military machine is in fact inefficient, and is not working smoothly. But it is too late then to remedy such shortcomings. It is during peace that we must prepare for war by making every component part of the machine—however apparently small and insignificant—thoroughly sound and serviceable.

One of the expedients for improving training was a novel form of testing infantry units. It became a bone of contention between military experts whether success or failure had waited on this, so called, "Kitchener's test," its critics often forgetting that it was meant merely to serve a special purpose and not necessarily to recur. Regimental inspection had not proved altogether felicitous. Battalions heard of their own defects, but had no knowledge of how they compared with other units, and there was a not infrequent tendency towards regimental faddism. By a system of marks for proficiency in various sub-

jects the "test" would inform battalions as to their relative merits, elicit special qualities, and bring to light the neglect of any particular subject. Marks were to be given for marching, attack of positions, bivouac duties, outposts, night operations, defence of positions, retirements, transport duties, and miscellaneous duties, with deductions for inefficiency, whether marching, military, or personal. If the ratio of inefficients in hospital through preventable disease exceeded a certain percentage, marks were to be deducted.

The Commander-in-Chief explained that his object had been to stimulate interest and create a spirit of healthy emulation. He believed that the test had brought about more progress in one year than would have been possible in five years had the competitive element been absent. While the standard of training in the best regiments was shown to be excellent, many failings had been exposed and could be corrected; and Infantry Commanding Officers, knowing what was expected of them, would be able to secure uniformity in training. The competition had been very useful, and its effect would not be evanescent. But, as the heaviest competitive work was bound to fall on the most successful Regiments, it was decided that for the future battalions should be judged among themselves in their own Brigades and Divisions.

CHAPTER LXVII

Although Kitchener—like Roberts, Wolseley, and other eminent soldiers—had never passed through the Staff College, he was keenly alive to its high value, and conscious of the *cachet* which it set on an officer's career. He knew also that there were many excellent Indian Army officers whose purses were not long enough for a two years' course at Camberley, and who were therefore debarred from competing for entrance. In order that service in India should not be penalised in this respect, he proposed to start a Staff College at Quetta, where officers would retain their Indian pay and live more economically than in England. The Indian institution was to be in every way a counterpart of Camberley, with the same rules, curriculum, and examinations, and even with identical lectures and a possible interchange of Professors and an inspection by the Camberley Commandant.

The scheme, readily acquiesced in by the India Government, was challenged at home, where the authorities were haunted by misgivings lest the establishment of a Staff College in India should create a separate school of thought, and so enhance and stereotype the existing diversities of military opinion. The reply to this point was laconic: it was represented to the Imperial Defence Committee that "the

Army has no military school of thought." On military subjects a few individual officers lead current opinion—some one way, some another: "I only wish there was more thoughtful research, and more effort to base opinions on well-digested knowledge."

As regards the divergence of training, which the War Office seemingly apprehended, it was suggested in reply that Staff training is based on definite lines which do not admit of any great variation, and that the aim of the Staff College, wherever situated, is not to breed a school of military thought, but to impart an instructional course of two years' duration, by which officers acquire, as they cannot do elsewhere, a sense and a knowledge of their professional duty: "It is not unlike a veterinary or signalling or engineering course or class, and bears no resemblance to the system of education at 'colleges' in England." Nor would any changes ever be proposed for the Indian college unless they were also adopted, or at least approved, by the authorities at Camberley.

A contrast was further drawn, not very flattering to ourselves, between the Staff immediately available for our campaign in South Africa and that which controlled the recent Japanese operations. The lamentable shortage of trained British Staff officers was thrown into higher relief by a comparison with the startling excellence of the Japanese Staff.[1] But even if the Government conceded that Kitchener's training theory was arguable, they still boggled at his preferring Quetta to an enlarged Camberley. The answer to this particular plaint was based on conditions and environment—because the training

1 Kitchener was kept well informed as to Japanese operations by Ian Hamilton's graphic letters, and as soon as the war was over several members of the Headquarters Staff were sent to study the campaign on the spot.

in Staff duties is not, and probably never can be, compulsory, "If a Staff College course of instruction could be made compulsory for selected officers I would willingly and at once give up the Indian Staff College."

Compulsion, however, was out of the question, and some alternative must be accepted:

The fact is that the best officers of the Indian Army will not go to Camberley, and it does not suit many officers of the British Army serving in India to go home for two years: (1) Because they cannot afford it; (2) because they are married and settled down in India; (3) because they feel that they lose touch with what is going on in India, where possibly their future lies.

What weighed with his officers weighed with their Chief:

A young officer gets fond of his surroundings and his sport, and does not like such a break in his life, which also costs him money, unless he has some special reasons for it. To join the Staff College here only means for a man a change of Station, not a change of life. Horses, servants, household gods go with him to his quarters at the Staff College, and he incurs no more expense there than he would have in his own regiment. What officers dread is the outside expenses in England.

The officers who had gone from India to Camberley had not always been conspicuously successful. Indeed, out of the whole number of these, only two were found eligible for the first appointments of Commandant and Instructor at Quetta; and a chorus of Generals—echoed by confidential reports from Camberley—testified to the disconcerting fact that in many cases officers who had not been through the

mill were better qualified for Staff duties than their more erudite colleagues.

It is these officers whom I want to catch and train for the Staff in war. It is not that we have not capable officers out here, but that they won't go to Camberley. . . . In default of their going there they must get Staff training either at Quetta or not at all.

The Quetta institution quickly rose to all that its founder expected of it, and Kitchener, in addressing the students for the last time, and urging on them the importance of "learning how to learn" and to "delight in learning," gratified his audience by telling them that what pleased him most was the tone that pervaded the place: "It is exactly what I hoped it would be, both among professors and students."

At the Staff College Dinner in 1906 Kitchener foreshadowed the formation on modern lines of a General Staff [1] for the Indian Army, and a year later it was enjoined on the new General Staff that it was their first duty to think—that their thinking must be directed solely to furthering the intentions of their General, who should be able to use their brains as though they were an extension of his own. The paper provided for the careful selection of officers for the General Staff, who after a period of service with it were to return to regimental duty; but it struck at the too frequent tendency of Staff Officers to lord it over their regimental brethren—a tendency not wholly absent even in the Great War, where the issues hung mainly upon the efforts of the regimental officer.

1 In a Memorandum submitted to the Government Kitchener had laid great stress on the importance of a competent General Staff for War.

CHAPTER LXVIII

The question of promoting native gentlemen to the higher grades of the Indian Army was a theme which after some years' fitful discussion had been laid aside. As long ago as 1885 the Military Member, Sir George Chesney, and the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, had expressed diametrically opposite opinions on the subject, Chesney maintaining that the Indian Army suffered from the exclusion of natives from the higher military commands, while Roberts grounded his objection to the proposal on the strong feeling inveterate to all ranks of the British Army that natives are neither physically nor morally their equals:

> It is this consciousness of the inherent superiority of the European which has won for us India. However well educated and clever a native may be, and however brave he may have proved himself, I believe that no rank that we could bestow upon him would cause him to be considered as an equal by the British officer, or looked up to by the British soldier in the same way that he looks up to the last-joined subaltern. . . . Thus, for the present at any rate, the grant of such commissions to Indian gentlemen as would necessarily place them on the same footing as British officers, is in my opinion much to be deprecated.

Roberts, however, was willing that the experiment should be tried of raising a Corps under native officers, so long as they bore no British titles or rank.

Chesney bowed for the time to Roberts's judgment, but two years later revived the question, pleading that, whereas in civil life almost every avenue of em-

ployment and promotion was now open to a qualified native, his military career was abruptly cut short at field rank. The Military Member, regarding this differential treatment as doomed, asked for the establishment of a military school for natives of good family who might there study their profession and learn to transact business in the English language. Roberts strongly dissented, and, reciting again the old lesson of the Mutiny, dangled before the eyes of the Government the possibility of highly trained native commanders using their knowledge against, rather than for, ourselves.

After the subject had slumbered again for two years, it was roused by the Punjab and Bombay Governments, who hatched out fresh schemes for imparting the higher military instruction to native officers. Though these particular proposals were not favoured by Chesney, he took the opportunity to renew his own, while Roberts warmly protested, "I would resist the beginnings on however small a scale." Nor did he agree that the real difficulty in improving the native officer's position was one of education: "In India, the least warlike races possess the highest intellectual capacities. The Gurkhas and Pathans, and to a less extent the Sikhs, are notoriously as averse to mental exertion as they are fond of manly sports—as apt to fight as they are slow to learn. Once make education the chief criterion of fitness for command, and you place the most desirable candidates at a disadvantage possibly overwhelming."

Roberts's three successors in office took no action in the matter, but in 1904 there was propounded the establishment of a military school for candidates for

direct commissions in the Native Army. The scheme was submitted to Commanding Officers for their opinion, and referred to a conference of Lieutenant-Generals in 1905, when Kitchener boldly pronounced that the dread of mutiny was an anachronism and must not hinder efficiency. The time had come to open certain doors to native officers, to increase their responsibility and to raise their status. The Generals agreed *nem. con.*, and voted for a military school at which both candidates for direct commissions, and non-commissioned officers selected for accelerated promotion, could receive proper professional training. The Commander-in-Chief prepared proposals for this, to be introduced when an opportunity should offer, as financial and political considerations just then barred the way.

It was just then not certain whether the Imperial Cadet School for the training of young nobles would be kept up, and any new scheme might have to be applied, not only to direct commission candidates, but to sprigs of lofty families wishful to learn the art of war.

A military training—and a commission as 2nd Lieutenant—had been given to young Indian gentlemen without a special prescription for their future employment; and special posts as Aides-de-camp, or in the Supply and Transport Department, had been not quite satisfactory expedients.

Mr. Morley, soon after he came into office, having been petitioned by friends of these young officers, proposed that a certain number of regiments should be officered chiefly by natives.

Kitchener wrote:

I have considered the question from every point of view and have discussed it with very many of those in India whose opinion is entitled to the most weight. I enclose a paper [1] which embodies the conclusions to which I have arrived. The difficulty of finding a practical solution of this most delicate question is immense, for, although there is a general consensus of opinion among the senior British officers of the Indian Army that some measure of reform is required, I cannot find any remedial means likely to secure the

1 The memorandum was an exhaustive minute which contained, not only a record of Kitchener's own views regarding the admission of natives of India for higher military employment, but also a complete review of the whole subject with the opinions of the leading authorities on almost every point involved. From it there stood out three complete proposals:

"First, that the bar to the higher regimental promotion of native officers should be removed and that we should proceed slowly and cautiously to promote those who may be found in every way fitted for advancement.

"Secondly, that in order to create a type of native officer qualified for such promotion, a Military College is essential.

"Thirdly, that to prevent congestion in the army and enable native officers to have a sufficiently attractive career held out to them, a certain number of civil appointments must not merely be open to them, but must actually be reserved for them, of course under such rules in regard to probation as will ensure their capability to perform the duties entrusted to them." Kitchener added: "The second and third of these points are conditions precedent to the introduction of the first point, and, unless they can be conceded, I should not be prepared to move in the matter at all, but I do not imagine that they will meet with any serious opposition. Criticism will centre on their eligibility for higher positions in the army which it is proposed to bestow on direct commissioned native officers. I am well aware that this proposal will be attacked from both sides, one party objecting to Indians being allowed to occupy such positions at all, and regarding the safeguards provided as illusory and insufficient, the other saying that the safeguards are excessive, and will result in the eligibility for promotion remaining a dead letter. I believe the truth lies somewhere between these two opinions. On the one hand, I am sure that the Commanding Officers, having the welfare of their regiments at heart, will recommend none but fit and proper persons. On the other hand, I am equally sure that the British officers will accept as holders of these positions men whom they have learnt to know, to appreciate, and to trust by previous intimate association in the same regiment, with a readiness which they would not extend to any one, however desirable in other respects, who was introduced into the regiment from outside.

"Nevertheless, I freely admit that the results cannot be precisely foreseen, and that experience may show that modifications are required in one direction or the other. The main points are that the principle should be admitted, and that the Army should understand that Government does not mean it to remain altogether inoperative. If the principle be sound and be for the good of the Army on the one hand, and of the State on the other, no mere prejudices, whether on the part of military officers or of civil officials, should be allowed to stand in the way."

support of the majority. This is due in part to the dislike of change and in part to a deep-seated racial repugnance to any step which brings nearer the day when Englishmen in the Army may have to take orders from Indians. Chiefly, however, it is due to an honest belief—which is certainly not altogether unfounded—that any substitution of Indians for British officers must be detrimental to the efficiency of the Army. I have however reason to think that the scheme which I have sketched out in the accompanying memorandum is that which will arouse the least opposition as well as being that which will most likely prove a success.

If it is considered advisable to take further steps in this matter I should like first to consult a certain number of senior officers of the Army, whom I would select, in order to obtain their advice and confidential opinions.

I would impress upon you very earnestly the arguments I had adduced against the proposal to treat suggested changes in army organisation in a similar way to political concessions. No more serious danger could confront India than that her Native Army should make common cause with those who agitate for greater political powers, a result which would not long be delayed should the army unhappily learn to connect political agitation with military concessions and to expect its share in the spoil whenever any successful agitation may force Government to concede greater powers to the people. I have therefore recommended that any grant of pay or rations should emanate from His Majesty the King, and should be announced in November, so as to be disassociated from the political concessions now under consideration which will be announced later. I would also suggest that if any change in the prospects of native officers for further military advancement be decided upon it should be announced without any flourish of trumpets.

Whatever political considerations might militate against granting to Native gentlemen an entrance into the higher military ranks, there could be no ques-

tion as to the advisability of adjusting and in certain small ways ameliorating the behaviour and bearing of British officers serving in the Indian Army towards the Native officers. The Queen-Empress had impressed on officers proceeding to India with whom she was personally acquainted the importance of showing the utmost courtesy towards her Indian subjects, and it was her wishes that Kitchener expounded when reminding both officers and men of what means so much to the Oriental:

1. It is of great importance that the conduct and bearing of officers of the British Army serving in India towards natives of the country should at all times be such as to inspire respect and confidence.

2. Officers, and especially young officers, in British units are not thrown into that intimate association with natives which falls to the lot of officers of the Indian Army and, when misunderstandings arise, the cause may not infrequently be traced to ignorance of the customs and prejudices of the people, coupled at times with some lack of consideration. Officers Commanding units, and all other senior officers, should make it their business, while serving in India, to study the native character, particularly that of Native soldiers, and by example and instruction should strive to improve their juniors' knowledge of the country, and of the ways and customs of its inhabitants.

3. The Commander-in-Chief is anxious to do all in his power to preserve good feeling between natives of India and the British Army, and His Excellency looks to the officers of the Army to set an example to their men in this respect. Lord Kitchener feels assured that if officers, in their treatment of, and relations with natives, will always remember, first, that they are British officers and gentlemen, and, secondly, that the inhabitants of India are, equally with themselves, subjects of the King, a much more satisfactory state

of feeling will grow up. In this respect it is particularly desirable that Native officers should be treated with pronounced courtesy and consideration, and as the omission of small acts of courtesy, unintentional though it may be, is liable to give great offence, a few words of explanation for those British officers who are new to the country will not be out of place.

4. Native officers should always be given a chair when other officers are seated. The word *"tum"* and *"tumhara"* should never be used in addressing them: *"ap"* and *"ap-ka"* are the correct expressions.

5. At public receptions and other occasions of meeting a point should be made of shaking hands with and speaking a few words to any Native officer with whom a British officer is acquainted. Any omission of such matters of courtesy is strongly felt by a class whose punctiliousness in matters of etiquette is a matter of common knowledge.

6. Though at first sight these points may appear to be trivial, it will be evident that they are not so when it is remembered that by the omission of these small courtesies we unnecessarily wound the feelings of loyal and devoted Native officers.

7. It is not generally known that the soldiers of the Indian Army are of comparatively high social standing: many of them are men of good birth and hereditary soldiers: some, poor as they may be, will take no service except that of a soldier. They possess many sterling and admirable qualities, and have proved themselves excellent fighting men and fit to stand shoulder to shoulder with the best. It follows that they are proud, and being sensitive, their susceptibilities are easily offended.

Officers were also enjoined never to neglect acknowledgement of a native soldier's salute, even if the latter be in plain clothes; and the rank and file were to be instructed and advised as to avoiding offence to native susceptibilities.

CHAPTER LXIX

Within a year of his arrival the Commander-in-Chief made some much-needed changes in the organisation of Native regiments as regards their establishment of British officers, in whose lot also he effected, not an hour before they were due, some healthy improvements. For many years many people had said—and said very loudly—that the altered scale of life and the increased expenses of service in India should be met by a corresponding improvement in the pay and promotion of the British officers of Native regiments; but it remained for Kitchener to take action.

When in 1903 he drew up a Memorandum on the Preparation of the Army for War, the leanness of the Indian Army was such that, for the mobilisation of no more than four divisions, there would be a shortage of 265 British officers. Even so, the question of wastage was ignored, and only 12 British officers were allowed per battalion in the field, instead of 15—the minimum requirement under modern war conditions. Nor had the barest provision been made for any additional officers to train recruits and reservists.

To mobilise the nine Divisions of the New Field Army 2934 officers would be needed, and the available supply fell short of this total by 938. As financial restrictions forbade the addition to the Indian Army

of 938 British officers, the only way open was to reduce the deficiency gradually by working up, as opportunity offered, to a peace establishment of 15 officers per battalion. This would entail an immediate increase of 470 officers, and as modern warfare tended more and more to exact British leading in the field, it was decided to take on 350 at once.

In 1904, therefore, one squadron officer was added to each cavalry regiment of the Punjab Command and one double-company officer to each infantry regiment of the same command; while as many squadron and double-company officers were added to the remaining regiments of the Indian Army as would suffice to raise their establishments to 12 British officers, exclusive of medical officers. In 1906 the establishment was further increased by the allotment of 14 British officers, exclusive of medical officers, to each cavalry regiment as well as to all infantry regiments, except 22 battalions which received an establishment of 13 officers, exclusive of medical officer, the Carnatic battalions being limited to 10 officers. This provision did much to enhance the efficiency of Indian regiments, but during the Great War the first months of active service in France showed that even the establishment here set up was too modestly calculated.

The old rules governing the promotion of officers cried for redress. Promotion in the Indian Army had been automatic on completion of the necessary period of service, without reference to the efficiency of the officer; it was a direct encouragement to the slacker and a discouragement to his keen comrade. Kitchener decided that no officer should be promoted unless pronounced fit in every respect, and specifi-

cally recommended for his step: thus a double new principle was introduced—inefficiency to be penalised by deferred promotion, special merit to be rewarded by accelerated advancement.

There were also personal conditions to be considered. The Commander-in-Chief noticed that where the junior officers were remarkably—even exuberantly—keen, a certain lassitude was often observable in the higher ranks. He attributed this to protracted service in an enervating climate, and suggested that, at the end of a specified period, a full year's home leave should be automatic.

Again, it was a matter of common knowledge that the expenses of officers, especially of young officers in Indian regiments, were absurdly incommensurate with their pay, and that debts to money-lenders were often unavoidably incurred. The evil was now investigated with something like paternal care, and simple and natural remedies were supplied to make income at least balance reasonable outgoings—the first concession being the grant of Rs. 500 towards the purchase of a charger on appointment to a cavalry regiment.[1] Superfluous full-dress uniform was suppressed, mess economies were instituted, and the regimental scale of expenditure reduced. Detention allowance was also granted to officers ordered from one station to another on temporary duty. In former days when locomotion was less easy and Indian Society was smaller, more stationary, and better off, local hospitality went far to reduce the travelling expenses of officers who latterly had been obliged to spend money on hotels and conveyances; thus, for

1 The silver helmets worn in certain Cavalry Regiments were within the experience of officers still serving.

instance, a week's detached employment on a court-martial meant a very unpleasant tug at private purse-strings. And, if the travelling tax on officers was a wrong, the inadequacy of the pay of junior officers of the Indian Army was an injustice which gave rise to a crop of small scandals. The young officer was, as a rule, wholly without private resources, and his current expenses, without any extravagances, were such as to land him in difficulties. Case after case could be cited of unworldly-wise boys wriggling in the grip of money-lenders, and visibly deteriorating in efficiency from sheer monetary worries, or at any rate unable to avail themselves of the privilege of home leave so essential for health and happiness. A Conference of Lieutenant-Generals in 1905 had urged an increase of pay in the junior commissioned ranks, and suggested that advantage should be taken of this increase to revise and simplify the whole pay system of the Indian Army. Three years later a scale was adjusted which at least allowed young officers, by the practice of strict economy, to live upon their still somewhat exiguous emoluments. Kitchener wrote to Mr. Morley:

As against possible savings, however, I must set one series of expenses which seems to me to be becoming unavoidable. I refer to the conditions of service of both officers and men of the Indian Army. The Indian Army in all its ranks is essentially a professional Army, willing to undertake any amount of work, however hard, but only on the condition that they receive a fair wage for a fair day's work. With the general rise in prices in India and the fall in the purchasing power of the rupee, the pay of the junior British officer and of all the Native ranks—after deducting necessary expenditure on uniform and equipment—has ceased to

be a living wage. In the case of junior British officers the only remedy is a slight increase of pay, but in the case of the Native ranks it will for the present be sufficient I think to adopt a much less expensive expedient—of relieving them of some portion of the cost of equipments which they have to provide for themselves out of their scanty pay.

CHAPTER LXX

If the soldier is to fight well he must be fed well;[1] if he is to make himself efficient, he must—as far as conditions allow—be made comfortable; if he is to respect himself in his profession he must be adequately remunerated; if he is to give of his best to his country his country must do its best for him. Such was Kitchener's conception of what was due, not of grace but of right, to the soldier under his command, and amid his large strategic and administrative schemes he never slackened in his care for the well-being of the troops.

Although he rarely entered a club himself, he knew the value of clubs and institutes for officers and men.

1 Kitchener wrote to Lady Salisbury: "The greater part of the native army is brave and loyal, but their physique is in many cases deplorable. They do not eat sufficient food, saving their money or rations for their families. This was just the same with the Fellahin in Egypt until I stopped it. They are always smoking a great deal too much. I mentioned having noticed this to an Indian Army General, and he said, 'You are quite right. In one month's campaigning in Tirah, out of a regiment of 750 strong, only 300 effective men were left although the regiment had not been under fire.'" (25.1.03.)

"I think the Indian Army qualifications may be overrated. The idea, which I know has been encouraged, that K. is out of sympathy with it, is an entirely mistaken one. Possibly he may not have understood it at first, and his shy reserved manner may have been somewhat against him, but Kitchener is always thinking of the welfare of his Indian soldiers, and what can be done for them and their native officers when they retire into private life. I am sure the Indian Army recognises now the enormous amount he has done for it in many ways. The more I see of him, the more I admire his ability, excellent judgement, and level-headedness. He would do splendidly in any position, and is a valuable asset which the country cannot afford to see put on the shelf. He is a curious personality, not attractive in manner, but has a kind heart buried away somewhere, and his inner tastes are much more artistic than military." (Lord Minto to Lord Morley, 30.11.08.)

Lord Roberts in 1887 had introduced into India Regimental Institutes which Kitchener warmly approved in principle and set himself to improve in detail. The management of the Institutes was purely regimental, and they were "run" directly and exclusively by the officers of the unit. Their success therefore hung on the interest taken in them by Commanding Officers, and their standards of comfort and attractiveness differed to an undesirable degree—Institutes deteriorating with insufficient interest taken in them by the officers. The funds available to promote comfort and provide amusement depended on profits earned, which naturally varied with the business qualities of the management. Another great disadvantage was that, on a unit moving to another station, the bulk of the Institute property had either to go with it at great expense or be sold locally at heavy loss.

Kitchener decided that Institutes should, at the discretion of the Commanding Officer, be managed either by officers or by civilian tenants, and that an Army Institute Fund should be created as a central agency for the improvement of Regimental Institutes. Under the earlier arrangements Institutes were practically "tied houses," as contracts with Indian Breweries compelled the consumption of a certain amount of Indian beer before English ale could be supplied. Kitchener, for whom no point was too pilulous, determined that this direct incentive to intemperance should be removed, and that, on the expiration of the contracts, only good English beer should be supplied at the lowest possible rate. The expense of removing or selling the property on the unit changing stations was met by the Army Fund

taking over the bulk of the furniture, and this cost was defrayed by a charge of one penny per gallon of beer to be credited to the Fund. The success which attended the experiment was immediate, and the British soldier was to enjoy a place of recreation and refreshment scarcely differing from the conditions of a Sergeants' Mess.

For some unaccountable reason the Military Saving Banks had been closed in 1901, when the men's accounts were transferred to the Indian Post Office Savings Bank. The British soldier, generous to a fault, is usually happy-go-lucky about money, and it is never easy to induce him to "put by," especially if he has to step outside to do so. The Commander-in-Chief gave orders that money could be lodged with the military authorities for transfer to the Post Office, and in 1908 special facilities were secured to the men for directly depositing their money in British Savings Banks in order to encourage thrift, and imbue the soldier with the necessity of providing for his future.

He found also—it seems strange that no one found it earlier—that the clothing of the soldier was a source of waste and worry. Hitherto periodical free issues of clothing had been made, and the soldier, having no personal interest in his wardrobe, was constantly requisitioning for new uniform. Under a Royal Warrant of 1908 it was laid down that, generally, the cost of all issues and renewals of clothing was to be met from a consolidated clothing allowance, to be paid quarterly. The men quickly realised that it was to their personal benefit to take care of their kit, as the fewer their applications to the regimental stores the more money they drew from the quarterly clothing allowance. Another practical re-

form was to substitute trained master-cooks for the native artist, whose preparation of the food had been seldom satisfactory, and not always cleanly. The advent of sergeant-cooks from the Poona School of Cookery was highly approved in the British Corps. The cooks were further employed in instructing as many men as they could make pupils, and in spreading a knowledge of cookery which experience in South Africa had shown to be woefully lacking.

Although Kitchener spent most of his life in the East he believed that, for the most part, a protracted stay in a hot climate was injurious to health and efficiency. And—with no home of his own—he firmly believed in making the home the centre of affection. In 1904 he approached various shipping companies on the subject of cheap passages for men who wished to take furlough home at their own cost. The P. & O. Company quoted a return fare of £20 per head, but this was found to be outside the soldier's means. The Commander-in-Chief tackled the subject anew and in 1906 submitted a modified scheme to Government under which soldiers were eligible for two kinds of furlough—payment furlough and free furlough. The former was to be open to all ranks, after two years' service in India, on payment of £15 for a free passage and messing on a transport. The concession was subject to the applicant being able to show that he had valid reasons for going home, that his character was at least "good," and that he was not inefficient by reason of alcoholism or avoidable disease. Free furlough was to be given, on the same terms as for non-commissioned officers, to all soldiers who had completed six years' service abroad, provided that they would extend their serv-

ices to complete twelve years with the colours, and would have at least two years to serve on their original engagements after their return. Certain classes were to be ineligible, and the maximum number absent from India during any one summer was not to exceed 250 on payment and 500 on free furlough. Payment furlough was eventually sanctioned, but Kitchener's free furlough proposals were more than the War Office could stomach.

The well-being and contentment of the Indian soldier were equally a subject for his Chief's solicitude. A constant grievance was the total inadequacy of the kit-money grant of 30 rupees per man. Kitchener represented to the Government that, out of this sum, the Sepoy had to be supplied with khaki uniform, great-coat, boots, puttees, and indeed every article except his cloth uniform and his arms. He urged that in the last forty years conditions had changed, and, whereas the Sepoy's equipment was formerly simple and inexpensive, he was now obliged to provide himself far more expensively, being liable to be sent at short notice to any part of India as well as to Ceylon, Singapore, and Hong-Kong. His outfit therefore had to be improved in quality and quantity, the expense falling on the man and the resulting efficiency being enjoyed by the Government. During the first year and a half of his service the Sepoy was usually writhing under stoppages, and his very reasonable discontent was exhibited in a growing tendency to shorten his service and take his discharge at the end of three years. This was obviously a penny-wise-and-pound-foolish policy, as the new outfit for recruits was a considerable charge. On Kitchener's

recommendation the kit-money was doubled, and reasons for grumbling were proportionately reduced.

In the course of his tours the Commander-in-Chief found that, owing to the increasing number of Sepoys who claimed discharge after three years' service, and the consequent excess of recruits in the ranks, certain battalions, though up to strength, were unable to produce the 752 efficient soldiers necessary for mobilisation. The evident distaste for military service was assigned on inquiry to three causes. The pensions were not sufficiently attractive; the deduction for kit and clothing put soldiering in bad odour with the agricultural classes; the rates of pay were low in comparison with those obtainable in the police, as well as with the wages to be earned on railways and canal works.

Kitchener endorsed a recommendation of his Lieutenant-Generals in favour of revising the pension rules and rates in the Native Army. He was bent on putting an end to irritating deductions from pay. He reminded the Government that the rates of pension differed little from those of half a century ago, although there had been an increase both in the cost of living and in the demand for highly-paid labour in civil life. At the same time, military training was exacting much more from the Sepoy, whose sphere of employment had widened to embrace not only the length and breadth of India, but Ceylon, Mauritius, the Straits Settlements and China, besides occasional service in Somaliland, Uganda, and Central Africa.

Under the greater strain a larger number of men naturally became unfit for further service. Up till 1886 such cases would have been classed as "unfit,"

and if fifteen years' service had been completed, men would have been invalided on the ordinary pensions of their rank. In that year, however, this privilege had been withdrawn and no pension could be earned without twenty-one years' service, under which period any man invalided received a pitiful gratuity. This hardship was the more illogical as it bore more heavily on those regiments which had seen most active service. The Commanding Officers naturally hesitated to send up men for discharge until they had qualified for a pension, and thus a number of men wholly unfit even for peace manœuvres were encouraged to serve on.

The result was equally infelicitous if the discharge regulations were strictly enforced, and many men, fearing a break-down, would leave the army after five years' service while physically eligible for civil employment. The short-sighted abolition of the invalid pension had injured the efficiency of units by loading them with young soldiers and had also caused heavy recruiting expense.

A Conference of Lieutenant-Generals unanimously agreed that pensions should be of two classes, "ordinary" and "special." Non-commissioned officers and men should be entitled under the ordinary rates to a pension after eighteen years' service, while Jemadars were to receive a pension after twenty instead of twenty-four years, and the senior native officers after twenty-one instead of twenty-four years. Men of fifteen years' service and upwards ineligible for ordinary pensions but about to be discharged because of unavoidable ill-health were now declared eligible for "special" pensions.

Kitchener pressed for an early adoption of these proposals lest the recruiting difficulty should become

so acute as to necessitate a very substantial increase of pay. There could be, he thought, no better guarantee for the loyalty of a community than the presence in its midst of a large and contented body of pensioners.

With Redistribution of the troops had come the necessity of service in districts remote from the men's homes, and that they should visit their friends at frequent intervals was a matter of special concern to the author of the scheme. Recruits were derived chiefly from the agricultural classes; a large proportion consisted of married men, and married quarters were quite insufficient. As a partial set-off to a difficulty, 30 per cent of the battalion received furlough annually, but this concession did not satisfy requirements, as men often genuinely pleaded urgent private business such as law-suits, marriages, and deaths. The expense of travelling, especially in the case of Pathans, Punjabis, or Hindustanis serving in Southern India, was prohibitive, and to soften the hardship Kitchener succeeded in arranging for the grant of return tickets for single fares for all soldiers going home on leave. Further, he decided that, whenever a regiment was stationed at a place 500 miles [1] distant from the men's homes, the Commanding Officer should grant special furlough and free passage by rail to a maximum of 20 per cent of the strength in addition to the 30 per cent already authorised. The arrangement was highly appreciated, and cut away the chief objections to stationing regiments at a distance from their recruiting centres.

It was hoped that the grant of increased kit-money, the revision of clothing allowances, the grant of a special boot allowance, and especially the amendment

1 Subsequently increased to 800 miles.

of the pension regulations, might forestall any augmentation of pay. But time and close study of modern conditions went to prove that the native army, and especially the Silladar cavalry, was not receiving a fair day's pay for a good day's work, and that an increase of emoluments was a matter of justice.

A suitable occasion for the public announcement of this great boon occurred on the fiftieth anniversary of the assumption of the direct administration of India by the Crown, and, in a special Royal message, it was announced that the terms of the concession would be promulgated on January 5, 1909. A special Army Order then announced that (1) all native officers would receive pay at the rates hitherto laid down for the highest grades of their respective ranks; (2) non-commissioned officers and men of the Silladar cavalry would receive a monthly increase of 3 rupees, and that non-commissioned officers and men of the artillery, non-Silladar cavalry, sappers and miners and infantry would enjoy a monthly rise of two rupees; (3) non-commissioned officers and men of all arms would receive a daily free issue of firewood on the graduated scale dependent on circumstances of service.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER LXX

"I hold that in India every Englishman by birth or descent owes it as a duty to his country to become an efficient Volunteer, and I cannot therefore help on this occasion expressing my disappointment at finding this duty disregarded. My remarks apply not only to Calcutta, for in all India I notice with deep regret that not half of those who ought to be Volunteers are sufficiently patriotic to belong to the Volunteer organisations." (Address to Calcutta Volunteers, 22.3.04.)

CHAPTER LXXI

Lord Curzon, on his reappointment as Viceroy for a further term of two years, took the opportunity between his two periods of office to return home in April 1904, chiefly from motives of health, but partly to confer with the Home Government. His duties as Governor-General devolved on the Governor of Bombay, Lord Ampthill, under whose friendly auspices the Commander-in-Chief proceeded with the new scheme of Army Reorganisation and Redistribution. The financial corollary of the Reorganisation scheme was not issued until August 1908, when a circular letter was sent to the Divisional Commanders. Drafted in great part by Kitchener's own hand, it bears trace of his financial flair. He always insisted that a good soldier could and should be a good man of business, and he here defined his ideas on decentralised control of, and decentralised responsibility for, certain classes of Army expenditure.[1] Embedded in the circular was a little homily on economy in the Army:

> The enforcement of economy is primarily an administrative duty. The process of audit merely weeds out unsanctioned expenditure; but, though valuable in the way of

1 A new Government manual explained to the controlling officer for what particular kinds of outlay he was now responsible, and how he could more easily check his monthly expenditure; the Separate Divisional Budgets showing him at a glance the exact amount of money he had at his disposal.

suggestion, it throws no light on its necessity. The administrative authority alone can say when expenditure is being needlessly incurred.

The Government of India accordingly desire in the first place to impress on you your responsibility, independently of all financial check, for initiating proposals for reduction of expenditure, and for restricting the growth of fluctuating charges in every possible way consistent with efficiency. Existing standards of expenditure should not be regarded as final, even though fully covered by sanction and of long standing. Establishments, though not excessive in relation to the volume of work and the modes of transacting it with reference to which they were constituted, may frequently be found capable of reduction by the adoption of entirely new arrangements; and suggestions with this object in view should, whenever possible, be submitted to the Government of India.

Kitchener's experience of the working of the military machine had crystallised the conviction that over all other needed reforms there towered the necessity of ending a system which subjected the Army in India to the twofold control of the Commander-in-Chief and the Military Member of Council. In a Memorandum written early in 1903 he had incidentally referred to the subject. Lord Curzon wisely recommended, and Kitchener willingly agreed to, a postponement of the whole question till he should have had longer experience of office.

But in July 1904, having been asked by the Secretary of State for a free and frank opinion on the condition of the Army in India, he had new occasion to allude to a crying abuse traceable to the Dual Control:

There is no doubt that, if we had a big war on the fron-

tier, there would be a frightful crash. A system under which Transport, Supply, Remounts, Ordnance, are entirely divorced from the executive command of the Army, and placed under an independent authority, is one which must cause an entire reorganisation as soon as war is declared—rather late to begin!

Money voted for the Army is wasted out here just as much as, if not more than, at home; but they all seem to like it, and efficiency is the last thing that appeals to any one except the Viceroy. What has been done in the past is right, and nothing must on any account be altered by horrid innovators from benighted England—be they Viceroys or Commander-in-Chief! Curzon has done a great deal, but there is still so much to do.

The proved success of his Renumbering scheme and the prospective success of his Reorganisation plans would be nugatory without further remedial action. Of what use, he asked, were well-trained and organised troops if they lacked ammunition, guns, horses, and transport, and if their supplies were defective? He suggested that for the next three years any available money might be spent in making the Army in India self-supporting in the production of war material—

which, if we were cut off from England, we should completely run out of, and be unable to procure.

By the extension of Indian factories we hope to be able to turn out guns and other equipments more cheaply than we have hitherto been able to obtain them from England; and this will have the further advantage to India that the money spent on labour will go to Indian workpeople.

Did he foresee that the time would come when Eng-

land herself would be glad to be supplied with Indian-made munitions of war?[1]

Kitchener could not forsake his point that waste of money is an inevitable outcome of the Dual Control, and a few weeks later, in reply to a query on expenditure, he wrote:

> I quite realise the danger of an Army becoming too expensive. The example we have had at home is very much to the point, but I think Mr. Arnold Foster is wrong when he states that the swollen Army budget is entirely due to the number of men maintained. It is really much more due to the *cost per man*. . . . The Dual Control of the Army out here is fatal to both efficiency and economy. (21.9.04.)

Mr. Brodrick promised to "clear the way for his reforms and smooth the working of the Departments at Simla." The question of a change of system, he says, is under careful consideration, and Lord Kitchener's views are "efficiently advocated." His letter has been shown to the Prime Minister, who "wishes the whole situation discussed at the Cabinet." Lord Curzon, who is in England, and must be consulted, is for the moment too much out of health to be troubled. Meanwhile Mr. Brodrick, in view of the "big piece of work" Lord Kitchener is putting through, deprecates his allowing "any difference on small questions to mar it." He favoured Lord Kitchener's proposals, but was a little sceptical about anticipated economies; his confidence in financial forecasts had lately

1 "We have already supplied 65,000,000 rounds for Imperial requirements outside India, and in addition to this I can supply 5,500,000 about the middle of November, and thereafter a similar amount monthly for six months." (C.-in-C., India, to the War Office, 24.9.14.) Curiously enough, the policy of making India supply even herself from her own munition factories was disfavoured by the Nicholson Commission of 1912.

suffered a rude shock at home. "The new scheme here," he lamented, in allusion to War Office reform, "is not doing much in the way of economy."

The appeal to put aside "any difference on small questions" suggested that the civilian had missed the soldier's principal point. It was no "small question" that stirred him, but the sense of a profound peril menacing England's rule in India and her power everywhere.

I am very sorry [Kitchener wrote from Saharanpur in November] that you do not agree with me about the danger of continuing the present defective system of Army Administration in India. . . . If we go to war under the present system I can see nothing but disaster ahead. Army Headquarters is entirely unorganised and chaotic, and yet I suppose some people think the Commander-in-Chief in India is responsible for having things in order.

Mr. Brodrick appears to have admitted the military argument; after consultation with the Cabinet, and on the advice of the India Council, he wrote a despatch to the Government of India which, dealing primarily with the divorce of Transport and Supply from the Commander-in-Chief's management, raised the whole question of the Dual Control over the Army.

CHAPTER LXXII

On New Year's day, 1905, in response to the Secretary of State's despatch and to the Viceroy's direction to report upon it, Lord Kitchener issued a historic Minute [1] on the Dual Control of the Army in India.

This was the starting-point of a memorable controversy—not confined to the two great protagonists—which, though officially settled within a few months, was destined from time to time to break out anew. The settlement itself was subjected to early alteration, and in the flux of time underwent further modifications in its working.

The situation around which discussion sprang up originated almost accidentally, the existing system of Military Administration having its roots far back in the past. When the three Indian Presidencies—Bengal, Bombay, and Madras—each possessed its own army, a connecting link between their several forces and the Governor-General in Council was conveniently provided in the person of an official designated the Military Member of Council. With the welding of the Indian Armies the authority of the Commander-in-Chief in India—who hitherto had been in reality Commander-in-Chief only in the Presidency of Bengal—became geographically co-extensive with that of the Military Member, and both had seats on the Viceroy's Council.

1 "I would state," he wrote privately, "on my reputation as a soldier, that I consider the change not only necessary but essential, if the Army is to escape disaster in war."

Long before Kitchener's advent to India the opinion was growing that this Dual Control was detrimental to the Army. Lord Roberts has been claimed as belonging to the school which regarded the Military Member as the oracle of truth and the Dual Control as the Ark of Salvation, but so far back as 1889 he had written a Minute on the relations between the Commander-in-Chief and the Military Department, in which he declared that not only had the existing procedure become "cumbrous, dilatory, and complicated," but "its defects were gradually increasing":

> The evils of the arrangement [he went on to say] are palpable. All the work involving references between Army Headquarters and the Military Department has to be done twice over. Neither the Commander-in-Chief nor the Military Member of Council sees the arguments on which the opinion of the other is based, and the Viceroy is apt only to see the Military Department's side on every case.

And when Roberts pronounced both on Mr. Brodrick's Committee and in the House of Lords in favour of the retention of the Military Member he was careful to say:

> I learn that a fresh evil has been growing up in the shape of excessive noting of criticisms in the Military Department on the purely military aspect of proposals which are submitted with the weight and authority of the Commander-in-Chief, whereby much unnecessary delay is caused and the main issue is frequently obscured by a mass of irrelevant criticisms and side-issues.

The opinion had been early held that one or other of the two authorities was superfluous. The Military

Member was generally thought the more eligible for eclipse, though Sir Ashley Eden's Committee in 1879, when condemning the dual system as impracticable, recommended the exclusion of the Commander-in-Chief from the Council. But not until Lord Kitchener took definite action was anybody inspired to utter the curious paradox that the Army needed two chiefs in order to secure an "equipoise,"[1] and that the Viceroy in Council should have two principal military advisers in order to pit their opinions against each other. *Divide et impera*[2] as a military maxim was hitherto supposed to be applicable to an enemy: it had never been thought to express the attitude of the Head of the State towards his own armed forces. There was something of fantastic novelty in the conception of the Commander-in-Chief and the Military Member as the two rogues falling out, with the Viceroy, as the honest *tertius gaudens,* coming blandly by his own. Kitchener, fresh from warfare in South Africa, saw in the throttling power of the Military Department not only an injury to military efficiency, but a menace to the safety of India: "In war the present system must break down; and, unless it is deliberately intended to court disaster, divided counsels, divided authority, and divided responsibility, it must be abolished."

It has been held that no man is worthy of the confidence of the country if he does not know how to resign as well as how to rule. Kitchener's proffered resignation of his leadership on the banks of the Nile is open to adverse comment; but in India, believing that to procure the removal of the Dual Control was

1 Mr. Brodrick, despatch, 31.5.05.
2 "The system is that of *Divide et impera*" (Sir E. Elles).

a prime duty, he had no other course than either to carry his point or relinquish his command.[1]

I feel it [he wrote] an imperative duty to state my conviction that the present system is faulty, inefficient, and incapable of the expansion necessary for a great war in which the armed might of the Empire would be engaged in a life-and-death struggle. . . . India is no longer in her former fortunate position of comparative isolation, in which she had merely to guard against possible rebellion within her borders, and protect her frontiers from the tribesmen and adjoining Native States. Slowly but surely the deserts of Central Asia, which were once believed to be an impenetrable barrier, have been crossed by a Great European Power. They are now spanned by railways which have only one possible significance; and we have every indication that our Northern neighbour is pushing forward her preparations for the contest in which we shall have to fight for existence. Even at this moment, as I write, the political outlook is threatening; he would be a bold man who would venture to predict that we shall not become involved in the struggle before our preparations are complete. We cannot initiate changes at the last moment; and it must be remembered that we shall not merely have the Army in India to deal with: the resources of the Empire will be freely placed at our disposal, and we shall have to account to the Empire for the use we make of them. Are we, then, really sure that, under our present system, we shall be able to discharge the heavy obligation which will devolve upon us? If I thought it possible—if I thought that by some minor modification we could secure this object—I would gladly say so; but I am convinced that such is not the case, and I therefore urge

1 The Viceroy had intimated to the Commander-in-Chief that he was unduly weighting the scales of judgement by tendering his resignation if the Dual Control were upheld by the Home Government. The Commander-in-Chief suggested with all respect that the balance could be adjusted by the Viceroy letting it be known that he would do likewise in the event of its abolition.

that we make use of such breathing-time as may be before us, not only in reorganising and preparing our Army for war —as I have already recommended—but also in remodelling the machinery for administering it, so that we can make the best plans of operation, and be able to carry them out smoothly and effectively when the time for action comes.

The issue was represented as a trial of strength between a military and a civil supremacy. In reality it lay, not between a soldier and a civilian, but between two soldiers. Theoretically, the Military Member might be a civilian, and his duties were intended to lie with the quasi-civil side of Army administration. But actually the office had always been filled by a soldier, and thus by degrees the Military Member, being constantly at the Viceroy's elbow and having a seat at the Council-table, had found himself not only crossing swords with, but dominating, the General Officer on whom was supposed to rest entire responsibility for the discipline, training, and distribution of the Army. The Military Member posed as the Viceroy's official mouthpiece, so that to resist him was to undermine the Viceregal authority. Kitchener objected, less to the Military Member's acting as middleman between the Viceroy and himself, than to his being able to interfere on his own initiative in purely military questions—to his being allowed to interpose a veto on the Commander-in-Chief's proposals, and thus quite possibly to prevent them coming before the Viceroy in Council for discussion.

It was here that the shoe pinched. Kitchener contended that the Commander-in-Chief's requirements should be criticised, however severely, and disallowed, however ruthlessly, after, and not before, they

had been considered by the Viceroy in Council. He asked that he might be free to conduct his own business; that, like other Members of Council, he might have direct access to the Viceroy; that his proposals should not be shelved by a rival official, or "minuted on" by junior officers[1] employed in that official's department:

> I am responsible for the efficiency of the Army in India, but I had no opportunity of explaining my own plans to the supreme authority, the Indian Government; they had to be filtered through the brain and mouth of another military officer. There is no question as to the right of the Government of India to decide finally on questions of policy; the civil power is, of course, supreme. All I contend for is that it must be adequately informed as to the plans which I, as the responsible expert it employs, think necessary for the efficiency of the Army.

Being taxed with an attempt to undermine a basic principle of the British Constitution, Kitchener could fairly retort with an appeal to the unwritten constitutional maxim that Authority should go with Responsibility. Undeniably, the man in power must be the man responsible; but under the Dual Control the converse proposition—equally valid—was flagrantly violated, in that the man saddled with full responsibility was vested with nothing like full authority.

Lord Roberts himself was forward to say that, "if the Military Department must be maintained, at

1 The year before Kitchener's arrival in India, the Commander-in-Chief—himself a cavalry officer—after consulting the Commanding Officers, had strongly recommended a change in the horse establishment of native cavalry regiments. The matter had to be referred to the Military Department for approval, but was returned with a minute signed by a captain saying the change could not take place, as the Department did not agree that the proposal would be advantageous to the Army.

least one group of functions now controlled by it should be transferred to the Commander-in-Chief." The reference was to the curious anomaly that, although the Commander-in-Chief was admittedly the executive head of the Army, the services on which the Army depended for its food, its equipment, its arms, and its transport,[1] were not under his control, but separately administered by the Military Member:

> It seemed difficult [wrote Lord Kitchener] to suppose that an army divorced from these services could exist as an effective fighting machine, and the removal from the military head of the Army of the responsibility for supplying the troops could not but be a bar to efficiency and a consequent danger to the Army and to the country. No commander in the field can be expected to obtain decisive results unless he is perfectly sure that he can rely on these services; and no commander in the field can administer them with efficiency and economy unless they have been trained and administered under him in peace.

The Secretary of State himself [2] adduced a glaring instance of the infelicitous working of the military machine. A request of the Commander-in-Chief, dated February 17, 1904, relating to Small Arms Ammunition, was not officially commented on by the Military Department till May 19. Discussion in the Department drifted on to July 21, when a despatch was sent home. Mr. Brodrick, considering the matter urgent, hurried to London in the middle of his holiday, and on August 16 telegraphed a reply. The Military Department, however, coolly decided to dis-

1 A very significant instance of this peculiar arrangement had just occurred. If the return of the Tibet Expedition had been postponed, no less than one-third of the whole Indian transport, which was outside the control of the Commander in-Chief, would have been locked up.

2 Despatch to the Viceroy, 31.5.05.

regard the authoritative telegram, and await details by post. Reference to the Adjutant-General and further correspondence occupied the next eight weeks, and it was not until December 22 that a decision was arrived at under which the Commander-in-Chief found himself obliged to accept a partial fulfilment of the requisition dated ten months previously. Mr. Brodrick also alluded to the serious delay in placing orders for supplies, although—thanks mainly to Lord Curzon's own brilliant financial administration—a large available surplus had for some time been in hand.

Even as regards these very supplies, Kitchener had to complain that, while he could not get the ammunition which he considered absolutely necessary, he had been loaded up with a quantity of Ordnance stores for which he had not asked.

"The Civil Supremacy in Danger" has been an attractive rallying-cry ever since the days of Cromwellian militarism, and great play was made with the allegation that the Commander-in-Chief's single military control would pierce the constitutional supremacy of the civilian Head of the State.

I am [Kitchener said] as fully imbued with, and as strong a supporter of, the principle that the Army should be in complete subordination to, and under the supreme control of, the Civil Government as any of my opponents can be. Two years' experience of Indian Army Administration had proved to me conclusively that certain changes were essential for the efficiency of the Army both in war and peace, and that the recognition of three principles which I advocated and from which I have never since diverged, as a basis on which to frame a sound system of Military Administration, was absolutely necessary. These principles are the following:

1. That Dual Military Control in the Army, and duplication of work in the Military offices, should cease.

2. That their chief Military Adviser should have direct access to the Viceroy and Government of India without the intermediary of a second independent Military channel, which caused constant misinterpretation and distortion of the views put forward.

3. That under the supreme authority of the Viceroy and Government of India the power of military control should be given where responsibility is held to lie.

No one will, I think, assert that these principles had any place in the system of administration by means of the Military Department, against which I found myself compelled, in the interests of military efficiency, to protest. If these principles are admitted, all that I have contended for will have been conceded; on the other hand, if they are condemned, then I have been wrong.

In a word, the régime, with its outcome of vexatious delay, endless and at times profitless correspondence, duplication of work, and possibilities of disastrous friction, was to Kitchener's mind hopelessly unworkable. After giving it a full and fair trial he decided to enter his official protest, and to say frankly that under the conditions of the Dual Control he could not perform the duties laid upon him.

CHAPTER LXXIII

The Commander-in-Chief failed to obtain the concurrence of the Viceroy. Lord Curzon, whose eminent place in the list of Indian Rulers is a matter of history, felt himself obliged to resist what he regarded as an encroachment on his own prerogative. Taking up the high constitutional ground, he declared that, since the Viceroy is the supreme head of the Sovereign's forces in India, no duality of control could exist—an assertion which did nothing to weaken Kitchener's logical position. For the Viceroy's supremacy—never denied or doubted—would remain unaffected by the disappearance of one of his two subordinates, and the Dual Control was equally objectionable even if it were renamed a Dual Advisership. The mischief lay in the duality—the dividing of the house against itself. And it was pertinently asked why, if a dual advisership [1] was salutary for the Army, the same arrangement should not be beneficially applicable to other departments, so that two Finance Members or two Members charged with Home Affairs should be played off one against another. Lord Curzon's reply—that the functions of these officials were essentially different from those of

1 The Viceroy, said Kitchener, could scarcely expect to find satisfaction in having to decide highly technical questions of military policy, military administration, or military discipline on which his two military advisers might give diametrically opposite opinions.

the Commander-in-Chief—left untouched the patent fact that to set two men to do one job is logically absurd and practically mischievous.

The supposed menace of Military Autocracy was made to double its part. It was predicted that the Commander-in-Chief would have not only too much power but too much work.[1] While he was roundly accused of advocating a military despotism and of "seeking to dethrone the Government of India from their constitutional control of the Indian Army," a pathetic picture was drawn of his being overborne by the weight of his military duties. Neither representation tallied with the facts. The bogy of autocracy was well laid by Mr. Brodrick, when he enumerated the graduated series of checks which every legislative proposal of the Commander-in-Chief would have to meet. The suggestion of overwork was well answered a year later by Mr. Brodrick's successor, Mr. Morley, when he remarked that the measure of any official's responsibility is not necessarily, or even commonly, the measure of his work; that concentration of authority avoids, rather than involves, multiplication of labour.

Kitchener in his Minute showed that so far from the Dual Control saving work for his office, its true effect was the exact opposite—witness the mass of correspondence, conflicting written opinions, and duplication of functions, the outcome of existing methods of conducting business, by which his work was vastly yet needlessly multiplied. Again, the specially selected and technically trained officers of his Headquarters Staff were involved in much extra

1 In his farewell speech Kitchener was able to quote the 65,000 miles travelled on his tours of inspection as a sufficient refutation of the reproach that his other duties had interfered with inspection work.

labour by the necessity of explaining technical points to officials in another department.

The process of devolution inherent in the reorganisation of the Army—by which a multitude of minor matters hitherto referred to Headquarters were dealt with by Divisional Commanders—proved so effective that twelve years later Sir Charles Monro, after eighteen months' tenure of his office in the midst of a raging war, seemed well able to cope both with his current work, and with all matters reserved for his decision, as well as to make such tours of inspection as he wished.

Lord Kitchener was at first impressed by, and was at special pains to deal with, the argument that during the Commander-in-Chief's absences the Viceroy would be shorn of responsible military advice. But the point was met by the Home Government's timely imposition of a Chief of the Staff. In time of peace no difficulty could be contemplated, as during tours of inspection the machinery at Headquarters would run on uninterruptedly, and the Chief of the Staff could adequately represent his master. In the event of a war of such importance that the Commander-in-Chief took the field, the same functionary could still remain behind available for reference, and a perfected system of field telegraphs should enable the Viceroy to keep in close touch with his military lieutenant, and to assure himself that the operations were being pursued agreeably to the general orders given to the High Command.

Kitchener's indictment of the Military Department was met by an opposing Minute drafted by the Military Member, Major-General Sir Edmond Elles. As

Kitchener in his Minute had said that his criticisms were directed against a system and not at any individual, so General Elles tactfully disclaimed any idea of resisting innovation if a case for reform were made out; observing, however, rather pointedly, that the trouble arose, not from the system, but from the way in which it was now being worked—a remark which of course offered a tempting *Tu quoque.*

Sir Edmond Elles denied that experience in any wise justified the censures passed on the existing system. The relations between his Department and Army Headquarters "could be rendered closer if the Commander-in-Chief would freely and frankly admit his subordination to the Governor-General in Council." The Military Member's principal thesis was that "by law every act done by the Military Member is an act of the Governor-General in Council." It followed that Lord Kitchener's criticisms had been directed against the control and interference, "not of the Military Member, but of the Government," because that functionary acted "on the delegated authority" of the Viceroy in Council. This striking hypothesis doubtless served to explain the attitude of the Military Department in the controversy. Whether it was a correct hypothesis was a question of law; but whether, even if correct, it covered the ground of debate was a question of simple fact which public opinion was well able to judge for itself. Sir Edmond Elles's Minute was drafted with great forensic skill, and had considerable historic interest; but, however meritorious, it failed to convince a special committee of experts, two successive Secretaries of State in Council, two Cabinets, and the Committee of Imperial Defence.

After studying the arguments of his two military advisers, Lord Curzon embodied his own views in a Minute dated February 6, 1905. In this Paper, which ran along the highest level of his famous prose, he stated his inability to accept Lord Kitchener's sustained indictment of the Military Administration, and impressed on his fellow-civilian Members of Council the weighty responsibility imposed on them of judging between an "almost unprecedented consensus" of opinion among eminent ex-officials, and the views of "an authority in whom all recognised one of the foremost living masters of the science of military government, as well as of the art of war."

It is not an unfair comment on this appeal to the views of past officials that circumstances had in recent years tended to accentuate the inherent shortcomings of the Dual Control. Lord Curzon himself candidly said that he had felt—even acutely—the want of a strong hand at the reins of the Commander-in-Chief's Department. It was natural that any manifestation of weakness by the holders of that office should have had for its sequel a stronger and more pertinacious assertion of authority by the Military Department.

In defending the Military Department from the imputation of having obstructed reforms, Lord Curzon aptly appealed to the personal experience of Kitchener himself:

> It is little more than two years since he came to us with an authority and reputation second to none in the British Army. We recognised the enormous advantage that was certain to accrue to India from the application of his abilities and experience to our military problems; and I assert without fear of challenge that my own aim and that

of every one of my colleagues, inclusive of the Military Member, has been to smooth his path and to facilitate the execution of the great task which, with characteristic energy, he at once took in hand. . . . We have in fact endeavoured to facilitate the execution of Lord Kitchener's plans by every means in our power. The result has been that, within less than two years, he has carried through a series of reforms that would have more than filled an ordinary quinquennium, and that will stamp his name indelibly upon the military history of this country.

Lord Curzon could marshal a notable list of the military measures passed during the short period of Lord Kitchener's tenure of office and on his initiative —a catalogue of achievements which did honour to the Viceroy's promptness in approving and sagacity in improving these beneficial reforms. Yet even so brilliant a legislative record could not be regarded as an offset to—still less be accepted in disproof of—the concrete and detailed complaints made against the administrative system and the spirit in which it was liable to be worked.

Lord Curzon was unable to recall any "occasions upon which the slightest attempt had been made to encroach upon the legitimate prerogatives of the Commander-in-Chief," who, he thought, had misconceived the constitution of the Government of India, and was proposing, "not to disestablish an individual, or even a Department, but to subvert the military authority of the Government of India as a whole, and to substitute for it a military autocracy in the person of the Commander-in-Chief."

It was true, the Viceroy admitted, that "Lord Kitchener had brought to their counsels a range of experience and knowledge rare even in the illustrious

list of Indian Commanders." But to his mind the peril in such a case was all the greater. In the reluctance of civilians to pronounce judgement on military questions there lurked the grave danger of the Viceroy being left to bear alone the burden of accepting or rejecting the proposals of the military element.

This extreme coyness of civilians as to expressing themselves on military matters—even of a highly technical character—is hardly borne out by observation; but, as Kitchener had explained, it was no part of his purpose to deprive the Head of the State of the best and fullest military counsel. Lord Curzon shared the fear that the Commander-in-Chief—besides being invested with undue authority—would be charged with duties beyond the capacity of any one man, whatever his energy or powers.[1] "If any man," he said gracefully, "were capable of such a burden, it would be the present Commander-in-Chief; but I believe it to be in excess of human capacity."

The Viceroy was confident that no change was required in a system which he now re-sealed with his approval:

With great reluctance, therefore, but without hesitation, I am compelled to advise against acceptance of the Commander-in-Chief's proposals. This is the first occasion on

1 "The statement that the burden thrown upon the Commander-in-Chief's shoulders is too heavy for one man is absurd. The fact is, K. has had very little to do for a long time. His staff say he never works after 2 P.M., but I believe that he is generally free long before that. Certainly he is an early riser, and does a good deal before breakfast, but his billet in comparison with others here is an easy one, and consequently he has been able to be away on tour a great deal. He has been a great decentraliser, and the divisional system has taken much work from headquarters. Moreover, military information now at the disposal of the Viceroy is far more complete than it has ever been before." (Lord Minto to Lord Morley, 1.7.09.)

matters of the first importance on which I have dissented from him. But larger issues than the authority or views of any individual are at stake. In my view the entire constitution of the Government of India in relation to military matters is involved; and it is our duty to consider the position of Government as a whole as well as of the Military Commander, and of our successors as well as of ourselves. With a sufficiency of tact and conciliation I believe that the present system can be worked both efficaciously and harmoniously.

The Viceroy's judgement was endorsed by all the civilian Members of Council, while that of the Commander-in-Chief was shared by all but one of the senior Generals in India. Six weeks later the Government of India sent home a despatch, to which Kitchener subjoined a brief Minute of dissent. In it, however, he repudiated afresh any notion of military autocracy or any wish to weaken that absolute control which must vest in the Governor-General in Council.[1]

On May 31 the Secretary of State conveyed to the Viceroy the decision of the Cabinet. They considered it inexpedient that there should any longer exist two Departments under the Government of India charged with military affairs. Broadly, the Kitchener protest was upheld. The Commander-in-Chief was henceforth to be responsible to the Viceroy in Council for the personnel and training of the Army, for strategical plans, for military intelligence, and for schemes of mobilisation.

1 A year later Lord Minto wrote to Mr. Morley: "I am bound to say that Kitchener's position as explained to me was entirely different to what I found it to be. I was told that he was aiming at a military autocracy, and that it was evident he intended to minimise any constitutional safeguards which might be urged. One can only take people as one finds them, and I cannot but say that he has been perfectly straightforward with me, and has, as I am sure you will see from the papers I have sent you, been anxious to recognise all constitutional requirements." (10.1.06.)

Duties of a quasi-civil character such as the purchase of stores, ordnance, clothing, etc., would be shouldered by a new Department of Military Supply, represented by a Member of Council, whose functions were described as "essentially those of a civilian administrator with military knowledge and experience."

The Secretary of State saw very nearly eye to eye with the Commander-in-Chief:

> The position is as follows: The most distinguished soldier available is placed in command of the Army in India. He is necessarily subject, as in every other country where the command of the Army is not in the hands of a despotic ruler, to financial and political checks. But in India alone, as it is believed, among all military organisations, the Commander-in-Chief is subject to having his military proposals checked and criticised by another expert of less standing and reputation than himself, who, after reviewing them, has the privilege of submitting the result to the final court of appeal in India, namely, the Governor-General in Council, where he votes on an equality with the Commander-in-Chief, and, finally, conveys to his own colleague the orders of the Government.
>
> This situation is rendered the more anomalous by the fact that the Secretary to the Government of India, who is necessarily in close relations with the Member in charge of the Military Department, is also an officer in the Army, and is available for consultation by the Viceroy without the knowledge of the Commander-in-Chief, who has consequently two critics of inferior rank whose views on military questions may be preferred to his.

Under the new arrangement, all measures involving expenditure proposed by the Commander-in-Chief were on the financial side of course to run the gauntlet of the Finance Member before being ratified

by the Viceroy in Council. They were then liable to be referred to the Secretary of State sitting in Council, and by him in the last resort to the Cabinet.

Mr. Brodrick thus sought to allay Lord Curzon's fears as to the creation of a system of military autocracy:

Your Excellency reviews the dangers which would be involved by having a Commander-in-Chief as sole military adviser to the Government. I think that, in putting forward this contention, Your Excellency has hardly done justice to the checks under which the Government of India is worked. Even if the proposal of Lord Kitchener were adopted in its entirety, measures connected with the Army would still be subject financially to the criticisms of an expert financier with a large Department, the head of which has a seat in Council. In their political bearing, they would come under the review of five or six trained Heads of Departments sitting in Council; while above and beyond both is the Governor-General himself, wielding great power, with access to all documents or persons whom he may desire to examine.

Supposing all these obstacles to have been surmounted, any change of importance, and many which are not of great importance, are, by the statutes which govern the administration of India, referred to the Secretary of State in Council at Whitehall. The organisation of the Department under the Secretary of State involves the review of any military measure by a Military Department which has at present an Indian General at its head. Such measures are then submitted to one or more Committees of the Council of India, on which experienced military officers have, from its inception, always had a place, and are finally subject to the decision of the Secretary of State in Council.

By the mere fact of the time occupied in the transmission and consideration of the documents, it is obvious that no step can be taken hastily or without due deliberation. In-

deed, were the machinery about to be set up *de novo*, it is open to doubt whether the Indian Government might not urge that the checks imposed on the passage of a measure, from the time it leaves the hands of its author, to its final adoption after discussion in London, are too numerous for the rapid progress of business.

Bearing in mind all these processes, which, though familiar to your Excellency, do not appear to have been fully weighed in the despatch under reply, it is difficult to understand how the absence of a second military expert in Council "would produce a military autocracy," or violate "a fundamental principle of our constitution."

Kitchener, though not obtaining all he had asked for, accepted the decision of the Home Government whole-heartedly, and bent himself at once loyally to carry out his newly-defined duties.[1] He set special value on his now admitted right of bringing his proposals in all their freshness before the Viceroy in Council without having to risk a preliminary veto being passed on them by a rival Department.

A question arose between the Viceroy and the Home Government as to the exact extent of the new Supply Member's duties. Lord Curzon asked that he should be "available for official consultation by the Viceroy on all military questions without distinction." The India Office admitted the Governor-General's "constitutional right to consult any member of his council on any subject," but denied that the Supply Member had "any special claim to be consulted." It was apparently feared that, if the new official were a soldier, as Lord Curzon insisted

1 He assured Mr. Brodrick that "although the scheme was not entirely after his heart, he would carry it out loyally." On certain points he was in doubt both as to their meaning and their merit, and he might make suggestions; "but, whether these were allowed or not, he would accept the scheme as it stood, and make it work to the fullest measure in his power."

that he should be, a wide loophole would be left for an eventual revival of the Dual Control.

Lord Curzon's resignation a few weeks later was due, not to the main ruling of the Home Government, but to their refusal to appoint his nominee to the post of Supply Member. If the controversy over Dual Control, accentuated by a subsequent regrettable misunderstanding, cast a shadow over the once cordial relations between the great Viceroy and the great Soldier, posterity will always like to remember that, eight years later, in the supreme hour of national trial, these two faithful servants of the Crown united to work in close amity with heart and brain against their country's foe.

CHAPTER LXXIV

The change of Viceroys in India synchronised very nearly with the change of Government in England. In November 1905 Lord Minto [1] arrived in Calcutta, and in December the Balfour Administration tottered to its fall, when Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman offered the portfolios for India and War to Mr. Morley and Mr. Haldane. The association of Mr. Morley with India marks a new phase in the story of Kitchener's Indian command. The incoming Liberal Government, deeply pledged to a policy of Retrenchment, had to accept as a legacy from the late Ministry the rather stale problem of Army Reform. The correspondence which passed during the ensuing three years between Mr. Morley and Lord Kitchener has psychological as well as political interest. No two men could be more diverse in character, in antecedents, in temperament, in outlook; and to the end their points of view remained far apart. The one was a soldier, who must always hold himself ready for

1 "I confess I have been very much puzzled as to the opinion of Kitchener which is so prevalent both in India and at home. It seems so often to be assumed that he is over-bearing, self-seeking, and difficult to deal with. One can only speak of people as one finds them, and all I can say is that I find him very broad-minded, very ready to see both sides of a question, and perfectly easy to deal with: whilst his minutes on the questions we have had to consider since I have been here have been much the ablest and most moderate I have had before me. Of course he has strong opinions, and no doubt is inclined to speak of them, but so far I have found him perfectly ready to look at this from different points of view." (Lord Minto to Mr. Morley, 1.2.06.)

arbitrament by the sword; the other a civilian of civilians, to whom the business of war was not merely alien but abhorrent—so abhorrent that he resigned office rather than be a party to it. But the innate frankness and sincerity of purpose ingrained in both men served to disarm prejudice and to break down any intellectual barriers; and their correspondence bears witness to a sympathetic understanding, even where agreement was unattainable. Almost the first letter Mr. Morley wrote after entering the India Office was:

DEAR LORD KITCHENER—I take the liberty of writing to announce to you that I am, since Monday, installed as Secretary of State in this office.

I daresay that your ideas and mine do not in all important matters coincide. But, be that as it may, I only wish to say that you may from the first count upon my careful and serious consideration of any views that you from time to time may lay before the Government of India.

You will not, I believe and hope, take this communication amiss. I am only anxious that, if controversy should ever arise, no sort of personal element should enter.

Kitchener was avowedly pleased and perhaps a little surprised by this suave self-introduction:

DEAR MR. MORLEY [he wrote]—I fully appreciate the kindness of your thought in writing to me, and I can also realise some of the difficulties with which you are confronted.

You may be quite sure that, whatever decision is come to, personal feelings on my part will never arise.

I naturally hope, for the good of the Army, that the decision arrived at may be favourable to the changes which were about to be introduced. I would only like to take this opportunity to ask you not to believe anything stated about

me and my intentions which I have not myself written. If you are in doubt about my meaning on any point, I am always ready to answer any question.

Kitchener, fully aware of Mr. Morley's feverish anxiety to cut down military expenditure, was at much pains to explain the running of the Army on business lines. The Minister did full justice to the soldier's care for the public purse, and, as to the discussions still carried on over the dead body of Dual Control, showed an open mind. The new Liberal Government was a little fluttered over "military autocracy," but Mr. Morley flatly said that he would "go into the matter and judge for himself." As he reminded Lord Minto, "it was no *tabula rasa* that they found" on assuming office; the compromise they had inherited must be carried out, the new Government declining to permit the controversy to be reopened.[1] The Military Department being moribund, and its heritable effects being in process of distribution between the offices of the Commander-in-Chief and the new Military Supply Member, Mr. Morley requested the Government of India to submit for his approval the amended rules of business delimiting the future duties of these departments.

The drafting of the rules revealed a cleavage of opinion in the Viceroy's Council as to the functions of the Army Secretary. While the Viceroy, with the new Supply Member, Major-General Scott, and the Finance Member, Mr. Baker, believed this official's

1 In the course of his despatch Mr. Morley spoke of a mischievous rise of temperature—to a point considerably above normal—in the discussion. The Members who had differed from Kitchener wrote to him, taking exception to the remark, and expressing their appreciation of his uniform courtesy and fairness to them all through the controversy.

position sufficiently independent to guarantee a constitutional control of the Army, they recoiled from any shadow of a Dual Control. On the other hand, their civilian colleagues—fearing that the Army Secretary's status would, under the new order, be inferior to that of the other Secretaries of Departments—were bent on strengthening the already strong constitutional check on the Commander-in-Chief which the Army Secretary could exercise.

A year earlier Kitchener had almost laboured the point of securing the position of the Army Secretary, and he now disclaimed the least desire to belittle him.

> With due regard to the satisfactory conduct of business in the Army Department, I desire that the Secretary should be in a position to inform the Viceroy of all that happens, and keep His Excellency in full touch with Army matters, for I quite recognise that the complete control of the Viceroy over Army matters must be maintained.

Mr. Morley regarded this particular point as "the pivot on which the discussion turned," and decided that all matters, before reaching the Commander-in-Chief as head of the Army Department, must pass through the hands of the Army Secretary. The Minister saw in this proviso "a vital element in any scheme which is to be at once workable and constitutional."

A little later Mr. Morley drew from the Government of India a strong expression of dissent by a proposal which, among other issues, would have abolished an office known as the Military Finance Branch, instituted as a *liaison* between the Army Member and the Finance Member—its head, the Financial Adviser, serving under both. Kitchener and Baker

urged its retention, the former claiming [1] that a special Military Finance Branch was of great value in the interests of economical military administration:

> It is most probable that, among the distinguished soldiers who will hereafter succeed me as Commander-in-Chief and Army Member, some will attach less weight than I do to financial as opposed to purely military considerations. In such a case it is essential that the Commander-in-Chief should have at his side an experienced financial officer who, while remaining subordinate to the Finance Member, will have the opportunity of giving special consideration to, and advice on, the financial aspect of cases before their reference to the Finance Department. (17.1.07.)

Mr. Morley was so impressed by the opinions of the men on the spot that he generously surrendered his own, and gave his blessing to the new rules, the effect of which was to concentrate all financial business in the hands of the Financial Secretary, and to strengthen the control exercised by the Finance Department over every description of Army expenditure.

A period of three years sufficed to cover the Decline and Fall of the Military Supply Department, although in India there was no disposition to bring this about. Least of all did Kitchener take any action, direct or indirect, to that end. The first move came from the Secretary of State, whose despatch of June 28, 1907, after acknowledging the good results of the Supply Member's work, raised the question whether the building and manufacturing services of the Army need be entrusted to a separate Department. The Government of India, while deprecating the disturbance of a compromise only eighteen months old, as

[1] Minute, 17.1.07.

likely to cause a recrudescence of heated discussion, admitted that the proposal, which spelled an annual saving of 150,000 rupees, was due to sound economic and administrative considerations.

Kitchener viewed the matter with mixed feelings:[1] "*Le mieux*" might well be "*l'ennemi du bien.*" The system instituted in 1905 was not of his own devising, but he had accepted it whole-heartedly, and deemed the moment inopportune for giving a jerk to machinery[2] which had not long been set up, and which—largely owing to the ready co-operation of the Supply Member—was working smoothly and satisfactorily. Personally, also, he would regret being deprived of his colleague's advice and assistance, which he had hoped to enjoy during the rest of his term of office.

Mr. Morley, however, although he granted it a year's reprieve, was decided that the Supply Department cumbered the ground:

I do not feel sure [he wrote at the end of 1907] that this apprehension [of a recrudescence of controversy] is well founded. It seems to me that public opinion has to a great extent acquiesced in the settlement arrived at in 1905; and, further, that some of those who were opposed to the change then made . . . now recognise that the Military Supply Department has proved to be superfluous. . . . In these

1 The Viceroy wrote to the India Office: "I had the case up in Council last Friday. Lord K. said very little except that the abolition of the Supply Department and its absorption into the Army Department would bring about what he had always recommended, and that in respect to efficiency, he had not the slightest doubt that what you suggest is right; but that, all the same, he would much prefer to leave things alone for the present; and the general feeling of Council was that it would be very hard on us to expose us to criticism which would undoubtedly be stirred up if the Supply Department is done away with, and the whole Army administration put under one head, as would be the case if the change is made." (23.8.07.)

2 One of the Headquarters Staff, in March 1906, told a well-known military writer that "Lord K. hopes nothing more may be heard on Indian Army matters—at any rate till all the new machinery is in motion. The one thing he wants now is to be left severely alone."

circumstances—even if a considerable amount of discussion and controversy were to be aroused, I could not, for that reason, consent to be a party to the retention of an arrangement which throws a heavy charge upon the revenues of India, and which in your opinion has been shown by experience to be unnecessary and inconvenient.

In January 1909 a despatch was sent to India in which the abolition of the Department was formally notified; and thus, by the successive action of the two great political parties at home, a new system of military administration—approximately as advocated by Kitchener—was at last established in India.

CHAPTER LXXV

Mr. Morley was no sooner in the saddle than he started a drastic cutting down of Army expenditure, maintaining that Russia's ill-success in the Russo-Japanese War had lessened the risk of an attack on India, and that the concession of Kitchener's demand for an increase in the pay of the Native Army must involve a curtailment of military expenditure in other directions.

A heavy stroke was then dealt at the "Kitchener Reforms." The cost of these was met by a "special grant" spread over five years. But as each year's grant had to bear, not only new expenditure, but charges recurring from former years, the annual outlay grew and the sum to meet it shrunk.

The Minister's letter to Kitchener of April 6, 1906, was ominous:

> Any reduction of European forces obviously, if necessary, ought to be kept as quiet as circumstances allow. For I take it for granted that such things are pretty closely watched in India, both Native and European.
>
> Mr. Haldane[1] agrees that, whatever else may be done, the

[1] Two months later Kitchener wrote to a friend: "It is sad to see these reductions in the army as proposed by Mr. Haldane. The reduction of Artillery and Guards is the worst part of it. I expect before long Mr. Morley will get his knife into us here on similar lines, reduction of military expenditure."

[1] An Indian Staff officer wrote that Mr. Morley was perhaps aiming at

cadres are to be preserved. This, I make sure, will be in strict conformity with your firm views.

Mr. Morley summed up the case between England and India as to the apportionment of military charges. While India was paying only one-third of the cost of the British garrison, England was charged two-thirds, besides the whole cost of the Reservists. The War Office held that, as India absorbed one-quarter of our total rank and file, she ought to contribute towards the Reserves, and—in case of war—further payment for wastage as well as for reinforcements. India would, on this showing, be debited with a total of slightly over one million per annum:

I have not yet laid this story before either the Military or Finance Committees of the Council here, nor do I intend to do so until I hear what you may care to say on this aspect of the things now coming under discussion.

What I deprecate as strongly as I can is a paper wrangle between departments, and so, I suspect, do you. Such wrangles never do any good, and they only impede business. It is my place, as the honest broker, to help to reconcile the general necessities of H.M.'s Government with the legitimate requirements of the Indian department of that Government. And the Indian department may count on my being a pretty stout champion—at the same time as being honest broker—of their interests. The difficulties are only too visible. The W.O. wants more money from India. *I* want India to pay, not more, but less, in military expenditure.[1] The W.O. seeks to reduce its contingent of men to India. Your scheme, as originally propounded and partially sanctioned, would require a still larger contingent. Rather a puzzling situation!

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the abolition of the salt-tax. "He will see, or rather has seen, that the two and a half millions which are more immediately ear-marked for K.'s scheme would almost cover the loss to the revenue by the immediate abolition of the salt-tax. He will therefore, I anticipate, issue a ukase that this sum is not to be spent, and that military expenditure will not be sanctioned beyond the limits of the Budget." (26.7.06.)

I return to my tiresome text—the Russian lull. I hope it may be more than a lull; but, whether or not, it gives us a chance of looking at our difficulties coolly in the face. The Amir, the "tiger-cats" on the border, the troubles of the unlucky W.O., the "bitter cry" in this country for Retrenchment, and all the rest of it—must be looked at as a whole and without any fuss and extravagance. . . . (6.4.06.)

Kitchener, who only sought to secure full value for public money, reminded his correspondent that military efficiency depends less on mere expenditure than on perfected organisation and thorough training; and to these, he said, insufficient attention had been paid. "Spasmodic efforts" had been a vicious substitute for "a consistent and continuous policy," so that, "although India had maintained a force numerically large, she had not had her money's worth in the shape of an efficient army." (30.4.06.)

Believing that a further cutting down of expenditure must endanger efficiency, he saw but two ways of easing the British taxpayer. One was "to minimise the risk of war," with an eye to "reducing the forces that had to be maintained"—a course which might create a panic at home, and tempt aggression from abroad, besides handicapping our diplomacy. The preferable method was to lighten the weight of taxation by widening the distribution of its incidence:

India [he wrote] should bear her due share of the burden, but out here the prevalent idea—strongly supported by Lord Curzon—is that all Imperial obligations, such as defence against Russia, should be borne entirely by the British taxpayer, and that India should be called upon only to meet the cost entailed by internal disturbance or small wars on her

immediate frontier. It is held that for everything else she should be able to rely on England, and to throw all responsibility for results on England. The more, therefore, that you reduce the forces out here, the greater will be the possible demand which England may have to meet in case of emergency, and the less help will India be able to give to the Empire in case of need in South Africa or elsewhere. Money payments by India to England, even for services rendered, are generally strongly resented, but the maintenance of British troops in India at India's expense is considered less objectionable. So long, therefore, as India's revenue can fairly stand the charge, I think, from the Imperial and financial point of view, it would probably be advisable in this way to relieve England as far as possible of her excessive burden of military expenditure. The War Office may say that this is not practicable under the linked battalion system, but to my mind that system is unsound and in no sense essential to our military efficiency.

Kitchener admitted two possible economies—the prevention of waste and a reduction of peace effectives, coupled with an increase of reserves. Provided the policy of Army reorganisation were conscientiously pursued, and the Government would go bail for Russia's quietude during the next few years, he would concede a temporary and limited reduction of British Infantry in India. But he stipulated that the existing units should be maintained, and that the maximum reduction should be 200 men per battalion, to meet the War Office requirements as regards drafts:[1]

But [he added], though willing to agree to a reduction of drafts to this extent, I confess I do not understand how

[1] Writing in June, Mr. Morley told Kitchener that "the War Office consider—so far as they are concerned—that you have treated them very well in assenting to a temporary reduction."

such a reduction can be of benefit to the War Office financially. If, as appears to me to be the case, the real crux of the military situation lies in the swollen estimates, and if Mr. Haldane requires reduction of expenditure, I should have thought he would be more inclined to keep the units in England—for which he pays—under strength by these ten thousand men, than to reduce the Indian Establishment, which costs him nothing.

As regards drafts, Kitchener's care for the health of the troops did not prevent his suggesting that with the improved sanitation of cantonments, the increase of hill-stations, and the preventive method of inoculation for enteric, men might now be sent out to India a year younger than at present. With a shorter period between enlistment and embarkation, and a longer average duration of service in India, there would be fewer men required for drafts and lower charges for transport. A rider was added that soldiers should have further facilities for visiting their friends on furlough.

The suggestion, made in the interest of England rather than of India, found no favour at home, and was tacitly dropped.

I hope, however [Kitchener pleaded], that the idea of giving men greater facilities for going home on furlough [1] will not be abandoned on that account. The popularity of service in India depends much on the provision of such facility,

1 Ten years later Kitchener was writing to Sir John French: "*July* 21, 1915.—I hear that leave is now being granted to the French Army at the rate of about 4 per cent, the period of leave varying from four to eight days. As the distance a soldier has to travel to return to his home is reckoned with, a soldier who is a native of the South of France is probably given the maximum duration of leave, which is eight days, as it would take him at least 48 hours to go and return. Preference is given to men who have been at the front for six months or more and to married men. What rules have you laid down for the granting of leave to our men? It would be as well to make them as liberal as possible."

and recruiting for the Army at large must necessarily be seriously affected by any general objection to serve in this country where so many British regiments are stationed.

Another round with the Minister was fought out over the Capitation Rate payable by India to England for the supply of British soldiers. The War Office made out that at present they were heavy losers; Kitchener demurred, and at the end of a lengthy discussion as to the proportion of expense which India should bear, he framed a possible basis for an adjustment:

It may be thought [he was careful to say] that, in dealing with this question, I have somewhat accentuated the separate existence of England and India. No one recognises more fully than I do that the whole British Empire—including India—must be considered as one and indivisible, the safety of the various parts of which is necessarily contingent on their interdependence. "Perish India" may mean "Perish the British Empire"; and the converse—any disruption or weakening of the British Empire—must mean very probable destruction to India. When, however, we have to arrange the money transactions between two parts of the Empire, it is, I think, admissible, and likely to lead to a fairer decision acceptable to both, to deal with the case more from the individual standpoint of the two parties concerned, and without giving prominence to the above consideration. (30.4.06.)

The Secretary of State seemed to think that the discussions might appear like a triangular duel between the War Office, the India Office, and the Commander-in-Chief in India. He replied amiably:

I am greatly obliged to you for sending so full a reply. . . . My only misgiving is lest, while making an effective advance towards meeting the War Office difficulties, you

have done a bad turn to *my* economic or economising intentions.[1] If I understand it aright, your suggestions about the Reserves, for instance, and an Indian contribution thereto, would mean an addition to Indian military expenditure, which is the very thing to which, if they take my advice, H.M.'s Government will not consent on any account —short of some pressing exigency.

I know you may say that India has a right to frame military schemes for which India pays. Yes—but the India that frames the schemes is not the India that pays: just the contrary. The India that frames is not India at all, but a body of Englishmen at Simla. And it is the business of us Englishmen at Whitehall to criticise and control expenditure on behalf of the India on whom the other Englishmen lay the burden.

But all this can wait. Allow me only to add my thanks to you for your last few words. For my own part, I assure you that I have from the first taken your loyal desire to help us entirely for granted, and shall continue so to do. (25.5.06.)

1 The War Office had argued that, since in case of war the Reserve would be India's principal source of reinforcement, India ought to bear a share of its cost. Kitchener rejoined that, if hitherto no demand had ever been made on India, it was solely because she was presumed to have neither a claim on the Reserve's services nor a voice in its management. To secure that claim and that voice he was prepared to ask India to pay her share of what the Reserve cost. Otherwise he foresaw that the Reserve would be utilised for some non-Indian interest. This was the point to which Mr. Morley referred.

CHAPTER LXXVI

Early in 1906 the Committee of Imperial Defence inquired whether the Anglo-Japanese Treaty and the Anglo-French *Entente* had modified the political and strategical conditions upon which Kitchener's reorganisation of the Indian Army and its preparation for war had been framed.

Kitchener, however, had no comfortable words to offer. He was by no means sure that the effect of the Japanese success was entirely to our advantage in the East; a marked change had come over native opinion as to the possible issue of a fight between Asiatics and Europeans. There was a shrewd idea abroad that what Japan had done Persia or Afghanistan could do; in India itself Russia's defeat was used in cheap rhetoric as a stone to fling at the British supremacy.[1]

On the other hand, neither the Anglo-French nor the Anglo-Japanese *rapprochement* appealed to the Asiatic mentality—Mussulmans, indeed, rather re-

1 "Japan's jump," Kitchener wrote to Lord Salisbury, "has fired the imagination of the Indians, and opened up to their minds possibilities previously unheard of. They cannot see how different they are in every way to the Japanese, and feel convinced that, if given the chance, they would do as well or better. Amongst the poorer classes, which form the vast majority of the nation, our rule is considered just, is liked and believed in. They fully realise that its abolition would entail their ruin. To them the higher native is equally distinct and unknown as, and far less sympathetic than, the white sahib."

senting alliance with a people whom they regarded as idolaters. And, if Russian activity had been checked through the disorder of her finances and depreciation of her credit, it might only need a replenished war-chest [1]—and perhaps the sympathy of another great military Power—to repair her offensive power against India. It could not therefore be advisable to slacken efforts or modify plans.

The specific question was then propounded whether the present establishment of British soldiers in India—namely, 70,680, exclusive of officers—was excessive, or only sufficient to maintain internal order in India. Kitchener suggested that before deciding the point it would be well to define the danger against which we had to guard.

The main danger was, of course, a possible revolt on the part of the armed Native force, though the probability of military discontent was largely discounted by our having given the Sepoy the option of discharge: if the Native soldier liked to leave, he could do so on giving two months' notice. The menace to internal order would lurk rather in religious propaganda among the civil population in recruiting areas, whence disaffection might easily spread amongst the Army, the Police, and the Native States' armed forces—classes dominated by the same religious influences as their neighbours, and, under the Indian system of inheritance and land-tenure, for the most part personally and pecuniarily interested in all matters affecting the civil population.

There were about 400,000 natives under arms; it was as a counterpoise to this formidable total that

1 Kitchener did not forget that Russia—mistress of herself and her millions—had anyhow been a barrier to German penetration in the East.

the British garrison was required in time of peace; and Kitchener asserted that, far from being excessive, it was only adequate by reason of the great diversities of race amongst the natives and their consequent lack of cohesion.[1]

He held that, apart from specially pressing conditions, such as those which prompted the shout for help from South Africa in 1899, any thinning of the British force would be not only dangerous, but deleterious; to undermine confidence in the stability of our rule would discourage the investment of capital in India and injure industrial enterprise.[2]

The proportion of the British garrison to the Native troops in India was laid down in 1859; it had since been repeatedly re-examined, and in principle always reaffirmed.

The Secretary of State next asked for the views of the Government of India as to the actual effect of the Anglo-Russian Convention on Indian military policy. The Commander-in-Chief in a Memorandum of October 21, 1907, which was accepted as representing the Government's opinion, expounded anew the complete problem of the defence of India, and elaborated the cardinal purposes for which our forces had to be kept there. It was shown that—besides safeguarding India from external attack, preserving order amongst the border tribes, insuring our ability

1 In Russian Central Asia the proportion of armed white soldiers to the civil population was as 1 to 92, and in the Caucasus 1 to 101, while in India it was about 1 to 3800.

2 "Capitalists will not place their money in India, nor assist in the development of its resources—on which this country's prosperity depends so much—unless they are convinced that there is assured security. If we desire to attract capital, we must be careful that no idea gets abroad that our position is insecure, or that we are neglecting necessary precautions." (Speech to Calcutta Chamber of Commerce.)

to discharge our obligations to Afghanistan, and securing us against internal revolution—the Army in India was liable for service beyond the seas, or for the general requirements of Imperial Defence.

The Russian threat to Afghanistan in 1885 had called for an addition of 10,000 British and 20,000 Native troops, the sole increase made in the Army during a quarter of a century, although—apart from the continuous anxiety as to Russian activity in Central Asia—there had been large accessions of territory, the chief of which, Burma, must alone absorb a large garrison:

> It will be realised that the present strength of the Army in India is not based on the consideration of any critical situation with regard to Russia, or on the probability of any immediate advance on her part.
>
> The Convention just concluded will, it is hoped, remove the danger of any proximate disturbance by her of the peace in Central Asia. But, even if it could be regarded as a complete guarantee of peace with Russia herself for many years, there are other conditions inherent in our occupation of this country which cannot be ignored when the strength of our forces is brought under consideration.

Ten years previously the North-West Frontier was ablaze with fanatical excitement; our total Field Army of four Divisions was employed for a whole year before order was restored. Since then the number of tribal fighting men had increased to nearly 300,000, with over 92,000 breech-loaders and 65,000 other rifles; and thousands of additional arms were being imported into the country. Conditions had therefore been rapidly changing to our disadvantage, and, in the event of a similar rising, we should cer-

tainly have to employ a very much larger force than before.

Behind the tribes again, and closely connected with them by religious bonds and by fanaticism, there always lurked the possibility of trouble with Afghanistan. The Afghan regular troops numbered about 100,000 men with over 500 modern guns, besides an armed irregular force of about 35,000. The Amir, during his visit to India in 1907, had stated that he was sparing no effort to improve and increase his army, and with our subsidy he could organise a much larger force, equipped with up-to-date rifles and guns. Apart from Russia, a fight with Afghanistan—complicated as it must be by the hostility of the tribesmen—would demand every man and gun of the new nine Divisions. The internal garrison would thus be dangerously weak. In no other country—even in peace time—did the military force bear so small a proportion to the population; and in war the Indian garrisons would sink to a mere fraction of the peace strengths.

The Memorandum laid stress on the significant recrudescence—following upon the issue of the struggle between Russia and Japan—of warlike preparations in Japan, China, Tibet, Nepal, Persia, and Afghanistan, and on the Pan-Islamic movement observable throughout the Mohammedan world, as productive of a serious effect on the North-West Frontier and beyond. In India, too, Japan's mastery of a great Western Power had given rise to ideas which must have an important bearing on our measures of precaution.

The recent Convention fixed upon us, for the first time, the responsibility of keeping the peace between

Russia and Afghanistan, and this was rendered more difficult by the deep animosity subsisting between Afghans and Russians, which was based partly on religious grounds, and partly on the territorial encroachments of the latter. Any reduction of our forces in India must induce the Amir to pay less attention to our advice.

It was submitted in fine that our available force was barely sufficient for proper security, and that any reduction was incompatible with the safety of our rule, and could only be made by accepting unwarrantable risks.

CHAPTER LXXVII

In March 1907 Mr. Morley, set on economy at all costs, directed that no works should be begun under the Redistribution scheme until he had approved of the estimates; and in August he further strengthened his strangle-hold on the "special" military expenditure by imposing restrictions on the amount to be spent on the various heads of the Kitchener proposals. At first contenting himself with cutting down the special grant from 325 lakhs of rupees to 250 lakhs, he in July 1907 intimated that the reduction would be permanent.

Deaf to the declaration of the Government of India that without taking serious risks no reduction[1] could be made, either in the strength of the Army in India, or in the general standard of war preparation indicated, the Secretary of State reiterated his demands for a meiosis in military expenditure.

Lord Morley, in March 1908, once more trotted out the Anglo-Russian Convention in its bearing upon military policy. The despatch rehearsed previous arguments, while it admitted the cogency of the Government of India's case. Lord Morley—premis-

1 "So far I have been able to resist attempts to reduce the Army out here, but one never knows what may be done. Indian opinion does not now carry much weight. Germany certainly looks as if she were preparing to take advantage of our weakness. I hear a number of German officers recently did a staff ride in England from Edinburgh to Penzance, and that they have been active in Ireland in the neighbourhood of our big harbours." (Kitchener to a friend.)

ing that the centre of gravity in the diplomatic situation had shifted as a result of the Anglo-Russian Convention—postulated that some readjustment of military policy had become inevitable. In particular, the necessity for improving the conditions of service in the Native Army had long been recognised by the Government of India, and important steps had already been taken to that end. He invited the Government of India to consider that question as well as the equally important subject of the housing of Native troops. To provide money for these purposes, while effecting a reduction in military expenditure as a whole, Morley suggested savings under two heads:

(i.) To dispense, either in part or in whole, with the provision of the new units considered necessary by Lord Kitchener to bring the strength of the Field Army up to nine Divisions. This would admit of the reserve of stores and animals being correspondingly reduced.

(ii.) To reconsider Lord Kitchener's scheme for the rearrangement of Divisional Areas with a view to ascertaining whether, by some alterations in the boundaries of the Areas, it might not be possible, without dislocating the Divisional organisation, to provide at much less cost for placing a suitable number of troops under each Divisional General; so distributed as to admit of combined training and reasonably rapid mobilisation.

Lord Morley further suggested the relinquishment of the additions to the Quetta and Baleli garrisons and of the construction of the new Cavalry Cantonment at Mhow.

Kitchener advised his Government to consent to the execution of a part of his programme being

spread over a longer period, to surrender the special grant, and to forgo the re-grant of lapses; but to be adamant as to any material reduction or change in the two great schemes afoot, and above all to press for (1) the conversion of three more companies of Royal Garrison Artillery into mobile Heavy Batteries; (2) the formation of four Field Telegraph Companies; and (3) the location of a Cavalry Brigade at Baleli, near Quetta.

In urging that their proposals should be permitted to go forward to completion, the Government of India dealt with Lord Morley's idea that the organisation for training the Army might be effected by a rearrangement of Divisional and Brigade boundaries. The question had been frequently examined:

> We have satisfied ourselves that the results aimed at cannot be even approximately attained in this way.
>
> But, notwithstanding the above, we believe that without reducing the Army and without abandoning the intention eventually to complete its organisation for war, it may be possible, without undue risk, to meet your wishes to a very considerable extent. In view of our improved relations with Russia the steps necessary to complete our organisation may now, in our opinion, be carried into effect more slowly and deliberately than has hitherto been contemplated. (2.7.08.)

The Viceroy's Government did not mince words in stating its conclusions:

> We consider that we went to the utmost limit of safety in regard to the question of actual additions to strength; and the fact that, at that time, we specially aimed at the most efficient organisation of a minimum establishment *makes it impossible for us now to effect economies by the simple process of abolishing units or reducing cadres.* (2.7.08.)

Lord Morley, however, pinning his faith to the Anglo-Russian Convention, was determined that money must be saved. He accepted the abandonment of the special grant and conceded the formation of the four Field Telegraph Companies; but he refused for the present the conversion of Garrison Artillery into Heavy Batteries, arrested all military works not actually in hand, and put a final veto on the Cavalry Cantonment near Quetta.

The deliberate reversal of his predecessor's policy brought to a standstill the military reforms approved by the Committee of Imperial Defence. Lord Morley had himself described these measures as "embracing the most pressing need of the moment—the reorganisation and redistribution of the Army in India": a fine tribute to them which he somewhat stultified when he deliberately sacrificed them to meet other charges.

The Commander-in-Chief's office work, which he constantly said had been materially lessened under the new system, in no way interfered with his tours, or even with such social avocations as devolved on him and which he manifestly enjoyed. His tours extended to an itinerary of over 40,000 miles. He visited almost every Indian potentate, and established cordial relations with them;[1] the native

1 "I have been touring ever since I left Simla and have had a very interesting time, and seen a good deal of new country. I went in 20 days from Peshawar to Cape Comorin, the most southern point in India. I saw some curious types of people. At one place the Maharaja is always expected to be gay, so every morning he has a smile elaborately painted on his face. When I arrived he had just lost his only son, and on my condoling with him he quite startled me by turning his grinning face to me. I afterwards found he was near tears, but could only smile.

"The caste of another Maharaja was the thieves' caste, and though he is very wealthy he has to rob some one twice a year to maintain his caste. If he cannot find some one to rob, the State hides some valuables and he takes them." (Letter to Lady Salisbury.)

princes entertained him royally after their wont, and offered him the best sport in their dominions. Kitchener appreciated this keenly, although, like other eminent soldiers, he was only a moderately or fitfully good shot, and his small experience of the *battue* at home was little to his taste. But he thoroughly enjoyed the opportunities of big-game shooting which India afforded him, and his tiger shoots were certainly his most exhilarating recreation.

His inspections were marked by rapidity and thoroughness rather than by any *réclame*. His staff was unprecedentedly small, and his movements published or heralded as little as possible. When he had completed his inspection he would return to his train and travel at night, whereas his predecessors had usually occupied a camp specially prepared for them or placed at their disposal. His reason for this custom—which was at first open to some misunderstanding—lay in his determination that, whatever his other terrors, the Commander-in-Chief should not be a cause of expense to General or Regimental Officers, and he declined to be entertained at a cost which he knew they could usually ill afford.

His own hospitality, both in Calcutta and at Simla, was constant and profuse, and his successors in office may well be grateful to him for the embellishment [1] of his official homes, where he indulged his nascent

1 "SIMLA, *October* 1, '08.—I feel all the better for my tour in the hills, and last night I gave my first ball. I always have to give two each year, as Simla is socially so large that they could not all get in if I only gave one. I enclose a photograph of my newly decorated drawing-room. It was taken before I got the silk for the panels and a different set of electric-light sconces, which are much better, but it will give you an idea. It is all white and gold with a light grey-blue in panels. The plaster ceiling and everything was made here in the house by Indian workmen. No European but myself had anything to do with it. I think you would like it. . . . When I have finished here I think I shall set up as a house decorator in New York." (To Lady Salisbury.)

taste for art and his constant delight in flowers. He was as pleased to win the prize at the Calcutta floral exhibition for the best display of orchids as he was particular to send to Paris for the *cotillon* presents when he gave a ball for the *début* of the Viceroy's daughter. His personal staff[1] were his constant companions and close friends, and from England year by year there came many of his acquaintances to stay with him and be initiated into the pleasures of an Indian winter.

In the early part of 1907 he was at Agra for the reception of the Amir of Afghanistan. That potentate declared himself, and evidently was, profoundly impressed by the personality of the famous soldier, who initiated him into the mysteries of Freemasonry, and Habibullah remained under its spell for the rest of his life. And if the personality of the Commander-in-Chief impressed him, care was taken that the Army should impress him also. The very strongest and most striking military array was made, with the air of there being a good deal behind it, and men and material alike struck admiration into the Amir's soul. "Why," he exclaimed wrathfully to one of his suite, "has the Army in India been so lightly represented to me? Why have I never been told of their greatness?"

Kitchener wrote to Lady Salisbury at the end of January:

The Agra week is over and I have just returned to Calcutta from Poona. The show at Agra went off very well.

1 Kitchener wrote from Melbourne to a friend: "I am so sad at losing my last connection with my happy Simla family. FitzGerald has been recalled to India and left me entirely on my own a fortnight ago. I must say I feel rather lonely without a companion after being so many years surrounded by my boys, who always looked after me so well and were such friends."

The Amir, although somewhat like Kaiser Bill, is not autocratic. We shall not find it difficult to get on. He is very fond of anything military, and really knows a good deal about it. I have had a good deal of experience in dealing with orientals of his type, so I get on very well with him. He asked me to pay him a visit in Kabul as his guest, as he would like to show me his Army.

And a fortnight later:

The Amir has at last left Calcutta after putting off his departure several times. In the town he bought everything from toys to a bridge with a 300-foot span. There is no doubt he was delighted and impressed with his reception. He took rather a fancy to me, and when we parted was so overcome that he could not speak and wept on the way to the station. I wonder whether his emotion was genuine. He insisted on dining with me the last night. Shortly after tea I said it was time for him to depart, and that our rule was to welcome the coming and speed the parting guest. McMahon pulled out his watch, which the Amir immediately seized and took away from him. He said nothing would induce him to go. He would sleep here if we went on pressing him. But anyhow he would not go before 1 A.M. I had to send and dismiss the guard at the station and ask the officials who were waiting to see him off to come round here. When I told him he was upsetting all his people he said, "I do not want them. Let them go to bed." He then proceeded to play the piano and sang and distributed photographs of himself. At midnight I took him by the hand and walked him out to his motor. I think at the back of his mind he thought it was polite to show reluctance to go: if this is the Afghan custom it is very inconvenient. This morning he has wired to me to say he is quite well and has thoroughly enjoyed hearing the big guns fire at Bombay. If he gets over his return all right I think we have got a good deal of influence over him and have done very well.

This meeting at Agra was not without its effect on history. When the Great War came, many attempts were made by the Germans to foment trouble in India, and their emissaries and propaganda were frequently sent to Afghanistan to preach a "holy war," or, if that ambitious policy should fail, at least to instigate risings near and descents upon the North-West Frontier. The shrewd politicians of Kabul were well informed of the course the war was taking in Europe and well instructed in the records of the German successes, but Habibullah remained a firm and loyal friend of England through the whole four years of the conflict; and it is not merely a coincidence that the threatened Afghanistan rising and descent upon India broke out within a few weeks of his assassination, shortly after the Armistice had been signed.

After the Amir's departure he started a little correspondence with Kitchener:

KABUL, 19*th Zelkaida* 1325.
(*December* 25, 1907.)

MY DEAR AND ESTEEMED FRIEND, LORD KITCHENER—Your kind letter, with the Asparagrass [*sic*] Roots has duly reached me. According to the instructions enclosed in the letter the Roots were sown: hope they will grow and give the fruits! In your letter you have kindly mentioned that "according to my promises I send these Roots." My dear friend, certainly I am also waiting for your second promise to be fulfilled; and it was this—that you so kindly promised that you will try your best to get permission from the Indian Government to send workmen for making Cordite powder in the Afghan factories, on fixed pay, for the Afghan Government.

Now I am thanking your Excellency for the fulfilment of the first promise—that is, sending me the Roots of Aspara-

grass. And I am very fond to thank you for the second promise also—that is, to send [a] workman for making Cordite powder, after he arrives Kabul on fixed pay, in Afghan Government service; because I see that the Afghan Government is in great need for making Cordite powder, and hope that, because of my friend's (your Excellency's) trying for me, will be successful in getting the workman.—Your Friend,

SIRAJUL-MILLAT-I-WADDIN.

FORT WILLIAM, CALCUTTA,
January 17, 1908.

YOUR MAJESTY—It gave me great pleasure to receive your Majesty's letter of the 19th Zelkaida and to learn that you are in good health after your long and successful journey through your Majesty's Dominions. I was also glad to hear that the asparagrass [*sic*] roots had arrived safely and that your Majesty was pleased with them.

With regard to what your Majesty says about the manufacture of Cordite at Kabul—as I told your Majesty when you were in India, the process is a very dangerous one, requiring special precautions. I do not know what answer the Government will give if your Majesty made an application to be supplied with experienced workmen for the purpose, as it is not easy to find qualified employees. But I can assure your Majesty, should you see fit to make such a request, and the Government agree, I will do my best to see that your Majesty's wishes are carried out in as efficient a manner as possible.

The absence of your Majesty from Calcutta this year is felt by us all, and renders our time of residence here less happy than last year, when your Majesty was with us. I pray God for your Majesty's continued health and welfare, and subscribe myself the sincere friend of your Majesty and of the gallant Army of Afghanistan,

KITCHENER.

CHAPTER LXXVIII

Early in 1907 the political agitation of many years began to assume a more sinister form. A spirit of unrest bred a school of seditious thought, and it quickly became apparent that the leaders of the disaffected party had marked out the Native Army as their immediate prey. They sought to persuade the Indian troops of the general fundamental injustice of the British rule, and to stir their bile by insisting on the differential treatment of the British and the Indian soldier—harping on the pay accorded to the one and the amount of work exacted from the other.

The story got wind at home that this effort had succeeded. The Commander-in-Chief promptly wrote to the Viceroy:

> My attention has been called to the following statement in the *Spectator* of December 10: "A condition of unrest has been created in the Indian Army to which no parallel can be found since the days of the Mutiny."
>
> If anything of the sort existed, it would of course be my duty to bring the matter to your knowledge; but such is not the case, there is *no unrest* in the Indian Army. This is only another of the many baseless fabrications that are now being concocted at home to influence His Majesty's Government.
>
> If Your Excellency has any doubt on the subject, I hope

you will employ the many sources of information that you possess to investigate the matter and inform Mr. Morley of the result.

I have no wish to trouble you with refutations of the many untruths about me that are being circulated at home, but this one is so peculiarly harmful and malignant that I cannot help thinking the facts should be brought to the knowledge of the Secretary of State. (11.1.07.)

The Commander-in-Chief just then also induced the Viceroy to withhold assent from a new colonisation bill which pressed hardly on certain groups of native military pensioners.

I daresay you would like to know [he wrote just then to a friend] what I think about the present state of this country. Well, amongst the disloyal there are two parties. There is a small extreme lot, who wish, and are doing all they can, to induce all Indians to join and kick us neck-and-crop out of the country. They have very few adherents in the Native Army, and are doing their utmost to seduce others from their allegiance by seditious leaflets and native papers scattered free amongst the men: for this we want a Press law.

The larger party, which extends to the villages, hope by seditious acts and disloyal behaviour to frighten us into giving them something for their personal advantage, while at the same time they remain protected from the more unruly classes and from outside contingencies by British bayonets. The latter party, however, seem to be gradually joining the former, and in case of a row would be all carried away by the more extreme party. There is a secret society—the Arya Samaj—which contains these two parties. Remember—Indians, like all Orientals, are extremely excitable and led away by lies.

The attempts to bring about disaffection in the Army were as grotesque as they were offensive. Unfortunately, the credulity of the native was apt

to lend itself too readily to these fantastic rumours. Agents were busy spreading stories among the warlike races of India that Government was attempting to reduce their numbers by poisoning the wells, so as to induce a spread of plague; by distributing poisoned sweetmeats; and by destroying unborn children. It was alleged openly that by such means the Government hoped to render more wheat available for export to England! A case was even reported in which some Native soldiers who were engaged in correcting military maps were prohibited by the villagers from approaching the wells until they had been thoroughly searched, with a view to discovering hidden poison.

Officers commanding regiments were equipped with full authority to strike at the root of the evil. Government was constrained to adopt stringent measures against the chief agitators, and Laj-pat Rai and Ajit Singh, the ringleaders in the Punjab, were deported.

The time was over-ripe for resolute dealing with the agencies which fostered and diffused sedition, particularly among the Punjabis, one of the richest sources of recruits to the Indian Army. Kitchener was anyhow determined that the Native ranks[1] should be protected from these pernicious influences,

1 He wrote in May to Sir John Maxwell, who had just been in India with the Duke of Connaught:

"The more one looks into things, the more general and deep-seated is this discontent [found to be] in India. We shall have to walk warily for some time to get things right. The prestige of the *sahib* has suffered, and the result is a want of discipline. People who never thought of criticising the British *Raj* do so now more freely. The native Press is responsible for a great deal; they recommend bombs and a combination to turn us out, openly and with impunity. We must stop all this.

"The Viceroy is first-rate; the Army is, I think, all right—one or two regiments are not quite satisfactory; and of course all this cannot go on without affecting the native soldier more or less. But, on the whole, I see no cause to suppose there is any disaffection of a serious nature. There

and he urged the necessity of repressive action against both seditious assemblies and treasonable literature:

From the very numerous reports which have reached me I am convinced that the first and most important matter that demands our attention is the protection of the troops of the Native Army from the persistent and determined attempts that are notoriously being made to tamper with their loyalty by means of seditious newspapers and inflammatory leaflets.

Agitators know, and have in many cases openly stated, that the success of their efforts to undermine our rule depends entirely on their being able to seduce the Native Army from its allegiance, and to persuade the Sepoys to throw in their lot with them. We have had much evidence to this effect, but it is only necessary to quote a few of the reports.

In May last the Government of Eastern Bengal quoted a conversation with a Bengali agitator who stated that the Indian Army would refuse to fight against Indians, and that every possible attempt was being made to corrupt the Army, which "must sooner or later be influenced by prevailing ideas." In a confidential report of June 6 last it was stated that the agitators were concentrating their efforts on propagandist work in the ranks of the Native Army.

On June 7 a Sialkot report stated that a Hindu agitator regretted in conversation that nothing could be done "unless or until the Native regiments have become disaffected," and

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are a few individual cases, however—which is not surprising considering the persistent attempts the agitators have made to tamper with their loyalty.

"I sent round a quite-trusted old Mohammedan Native officer to see how things were. In one station where there were two Sikh regiments he got into conversation with a Mohammedan armourer in each regiment, and they promised to let him know the feeling in their regiments. A few days after, Number 1 armourer went to see Number 2 in the other lines. He had not been five minutes before a Native officer turned up and asked him his business. In the shop a torn copy of the paper *Hindustan* was lying about. The Native Sikh officer spotted this and called the senior Native officer. He came with other officers, and our armourers were hooted for having seditious literature and 'bringing disgrace upon the Regiment,' etc., and Number 1 was hustled out of the regimental lines.

"So you see they are on the *qui vive*."

that this would not happen until they had been better educated as regards their grievances.

On June 9 it was reported that a Meerut lawyer, a well-known sedition-monger, had also remarked that it was recognised by the leaders that nothing could be done until the Native troops had been won over.

His vigorous representations were punctuated by proofs of the growing audacity of the sedition-mongers, who were just then adding the item of assassination to their political programme.

The Government of India drafted a Bill for the stricter control of public meetings and for the prosecution of publishers of seditious literature, and at Kitchener's request inserted a clause directed against such propaganda within military cantonments. In a minute of June 5 he urged immediate and uncompromising action. Treason, he bluntly said, could go no further than for an Indian newspaper to speak of the King-Emperor—in whom the loyalty of the Army should be centred—as drunken, careless, sinful, and tyrannical. Although this astounding utterance had been reported more than a month previously, no official notice had been taken—"This shakes to its very foundation the confidence of the Native soldier in the efficiency of our power and the stability of our rule."[1] The warning fell unheeded on official-civilian ears, which could not be persuaded that dissemination of disaffection in military cantonments is far more injurious, even if not more offensive, than elsewhere. A colourless Act was passed for the prevention of meetings likely to promote sedition; its limitations defeated its object; many of the extremist

1 A native soldier, decorated with two medals, had actually addressed a meeting held at Calcutta to demand the abolition of British rule in India.

leaders, deprived of the opportunity of tub-thumping, sought an outlet for their rancour by penning gross newspaper articles. Outrages succeeded one another, and there was a little epidemic of bomb-throwing—the usual victims being the officials who were in the black books of the disloyal party. Further action had to be taken, and on June 8 there was enacted a belated measure, based on the English Act of 1883. Another Act was also passed to penalise newspaper incitements to murder and other crimes. Kitchener's advice had long ago indicated such legislation, but the Government was only now spurred in its course by the disclosure of intimate relations between the perpetrators of crimes and the proprietors of certain journals.

The stream of outrages was, however, unstemmed. A Government approver was actually murdered in the Alipore gaol at Calcutta; a Bengali police-inspector, whose intrepid activity had made him specially obnoxious, was shot dead outside his own door; and a second attempt was made on the life of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. The Government was now really roused, and on December 11, 1908, the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act was passed to expedite the trial of anarchical offences, and to suppress the pernicious secret societies.

It spoke well for the high standard of discipline in the Native Army that, during this searching period, in only a few instances could it be found that the Native ranks had succumbed to sinister cajoleries —only one Native soldier, a Sikh, was actually tried under the Indian articles of war for sedition.[1] At

1 "Notwithstanding the agitation which has recently been going on in the Punjab, an attempt made to influence the Army, I am glad to say the loyalty of the Sepoys has not been affected." (Kitchener to Morley, 23.5.07.)

a meeting of the Legislative Council on November 1, 1907, the Viceroy was forward to say:

I hope that your Excellency, as Commander-in-Chief, will, on my behalf as Viceroy and representative of the King-Emperor, convey to His Majesty's Indian troops my thanks for the contempt with which they have received the disgraceful overtures which I know have been made to them.

CHAPTER LXXIX

One of the few occasions on which Kitchener altogether in vain withstood Mr. Morley to the face was when he begged that a sanatorium for Aden should be established at Dthala in the interior. Dthala is the capital of the Amir of that province, an Arab chief whose territory is under the protection of the British Government, and who received from it a subsidy, conditional—among other points—on his keeping up a prescribed force there. Situated about 5000 feet above the sea and 96 miles from Aden, Dthala offered a wholesome contrast to that hotbed of sickness for British soldiers of which the better part has been aptly described as "Hell with the lid off," while the crater where troops were also placed was dubbed "Hell with the lid on." The Political Resident, General De Brath, had written to Mr. Morley urging the inexpediency on political, military, and humanitarian grounds of giving up Dthala, and saying bluntly that the British troops were rotting at Aden. "I should like," he remarked, "to see the regiment of Native troops withdrawn from Dthala and replaced by two companies of British troops. This would have the effect of reducing the garrison by six companies, and at the same time would enable us to withdraw British troops from the crater." Mr. Morley forwarded the letter for Kitchener's perusal, and on August 23, 1906, wrote himself:

Some leading man at the War Office has told me that in returning from India (I think) he found our troops as fit as possible. I had a long conversation with General Mason [1]

[1] General De Brath's predecessor.

on his return from Aden, and I did not gather from him, though he was much in favour of the sanatorium on the uplands, that our force at Aden was in such desperate case as De Brath seems to discover. Political considerations, you may justly say, are not your office, but there is no harm in my saying to you that it is important in our view that we should just now avoid any step which might be construed by the suspicious Turk (with a certain European Power at his ear) as looking as if we had designs on his Holy Places, etc. Anyhow it is proper that you should have a chance of knowing what De Brath says on the actual state of things.

Kitchener put in two powerful pleas for Dthala:

I visited Aden several times and can assure you that it is one of the worst stations for British troops which we have to maintain. In India we are doing all we can to send as many British soldiers as we can to the hills in the hot weather. I would urge from a humanitarian point of view that a sanatorium at Dthala for the British Garrison at Aden is most necessary and should be retained. I cannot help thinking that, now that this hinterland has become British territory, it would have a very bad effect if the Government refused to allow this much-needed sanatorium to be established on a high and healthy plateau. I know that Turkey is very jealous of any approach to the Holy Places or increase to our influence in Arabia, but it is not so much from the Aden side that they are apprehensive regarding us—it is rather the position and hold we have in Egypt and Suakin which causes them anxiety, and I feel sure that abstention on our part from using Dthala as proposed would have little or no effect on the Turks—the contrary might even reassure them as giving a reason for our recent extension of territory. On the other hand, our leaving Dthala might give rise to local troubles, and any military action in suppressing these would probably cause considerable suspicion at Constantinople. I sincerely hope that after consideration you will agree to our having a military sanatorium at Dthala.

Mr. Morley now had to choose between the opinion of an official on the spot, supported by the chief military authority, and the lukewarm recommendation of the former Political Resident, coupled with the statement of the nebulous individual whom he described as "some leading man at the War Office," whose stay at Aden was presumably limited to the three hours allotted to passengers. Mr. Morley, after marshalling political obstacles and suggesting that "a host of most tiresome questions" would be raised by a British cantonment in foreign territory, thought to clinch his case by the prospect of expensive transport: "Of course a sanatorium is an advantage. But don't let us forget the heavy cost; the difficulties of a Civil establishment at Dthala; political entanglements; and finally the removal of part of the garrison to a dangerous distance (80 miles or more) from its work, unless we go in for a railway." Economy—near akin to parsimony—gained the day, and Kitchener was finally worsted in his efforts for the often sick, and generally sorry, soldiers at Aden.

The differences of opinion which now and again almost hardened into official duels did nothing to mar personal regard, and the Secretary of State even stepped out of usual routine to inquire if the Commander-in-Chief would accept a proposal from the War Minister to remain two years beyond the original and usual appointment:

March 15, 1907.—As the expiry of your term in the post of Commander-in-Chief is now coming into sight, I take the liberty of inquiring whether it would be agreeable to you to have the term extended for two years more. As you know, the appointment rests with the Secretary of State for War,

and not with me; but I have every reason to believe that this extension would command his cordial concurrence. Before, however, the matter takes formal shape in Mr. Haldane's hands, it would be an advantage if you would tell me that your own wishes and views point the same way as mine. I am sure that the Viceroy would be much gratified if you assent to my proposal. He will tell you so.

The Indian military problem perhaps approaches a rather critical stage (not that I apprehend what is called a Crisis, or anything like a Crisis), and I see no grounds for doubting your zealous co-operation in bringing the next stage of things to as satisfactory a settlement as circumstances allow. On the other hand, the enormous advantages of your continued presence in India,[1] from every point of view, are so obvious, that it would be waste of time for me to press them upon you. So, in short, I hope very strongly

1 Six months earlier Mr. Morley had consulted the Viceroy as to this extension: "I have just sent you a telegram [Lord Minto wrote] in reply to your question about a possible extension of Kitchener's time. . . . I had a talk with him some weeks ago, and he told me he would like to stay on here to complete his work, but that he saw no particular reason for raising the point just now as he had still some time to run; that he certainly did not look forward to taking up military work at home, and that he did not feel inclined to share the labours of the Army Council. I told him I could quite understand this, but at the same time he might, no doubt, if he liked, exercise considerable influence on army matters in the House of Lords. He said he saw this too, but he was evidently not looking forward to a career at home. He then told me very privately that what he would really like would be to succeed Lord Cromer in Egypt; that he felt he could fill the position, and that he imagined Cromer would not stay on much longer, and that he might wait and see. . . . The more I see of him, the more confirmed I am in the opinions I have expressed to you about him. He is a most able administrator, and I always find him broad-minded, far-seeing, and very ready to look at both sides of a question. I would put Kitchener far beyond the military category. I believe him to be a really big man whose abilities the country should never lose sight of. I can assure you that since I have been here, he has shown every anxiety to meet any views I have expressed, and I am quite certain that should he stay on here you would never find him the least inclined to overpress his opinions. He would express them no doubt clearly and strongly, but beyond that I am sure he recognises that a true imperial strength lies in loyally working out the views of His Majesty's Government. Personally, I never look upon him as entirely absorbed in purely military work. He is a curious personality, rather shy, and very much wrapt up in his garden. If he goes home and feels that he is not likely to follow up a career suitable to his ambition, I can quite imagine his retiring into private life."

that you will give me an affirmative answer, which I may convey to the proper quarters, and the sooner you are in a position to reply, the more convenient it will be.

Kitchener was not perhaps unprepared for the invitation, although he had not made the slightest move to secure it. He answered frankly:

April 7, 1907.—I am very grateful to you for the kind terms of your letter offering me an extension of my command in India. Lord Minto has told me he wishes me to continue my work, in which I naturally take the greatest interest. I have therefore asked him to wire to you my acceptance and thanks for your kindness and appreciation of my work.[1]

My only doubt about accepting your kind offer of an extension of command related to a personal matter, namely health. I have recently had a good many attacks of malarial fever, and I was rather looking forward to a complete change and rest at the end of my five years in India. I have, however, been quite well lately, and my doctor passes me as sound; so I hope that nothing will interfere with my being able to carry out the extension you have been good enough to give me.

I shall do my best during my extension to carry out your wishes as regards the administration of the Army on sound and economical lines.

I am now, after the Calcutta session, taking the usual fortnight for shooting in the jungle, before inspecting in northern India. We have only got three tigers and three bears up to date.

Mr. Morley amiably rejoined:

1 Kitchener wrote just then rather wistfully to Lady Salisbury: "Yes, I have always looked forward to my first Sunday in England being spent at Hatfield. It is a time-honoured institution, is it not? Sometimes the realisation of the pleasure it will give me seems a long way off, but the years pass quickly out here as one has lots of work, and now the work is all quite pleasant, for a new system of army administration has more than justified my wildest hopes."

May 3, 1907.—Your letter of April 7 gives me lively satisfaction, and I am heartily glad that you agree to go on. The official notification from the War Office will most likely reach you by this mail, I think.

Nothing can be more valued by me and H.M.'s Government than what you call "sound and economical administration."

I hope you have quite thrown off your fever.

But the fever was persistent, and that summer found, and left, Kitchener physically a little out of sorts. On September 24, with the approval of the Viceroy, he asked a favour of the Home Government:

I am writing to ask whether you have any objection to my visiting Singapore, Hong-Kong, and North China about the beginning of April next year. I have ascertained that there will be no objection on the Viceroy's part, and he has authorised me to write to you on the subject. I should by this means have an opportunity of making myself acquainted with the conditions under which those regiments of native infantry serve which India lends to the War Office for garrison duty. The principal reason, however, is that I am anxious as regards my own health, and have been advised that a rest and sea-voyage would be of great value to me. In November next I complete five years' service as Commander-in-Chief, and they have, as you know, been years of incessant work. On my return from South Africa I had practically no leave before coming to India, and I now feel that my services during the two years' extension you have been good enough to give me are likely to be of much greater value if I were allowed to enter on them after a short respite from the continuous work that follows a Commander-in-Chief wherever he goes in India. By leaving immediately after the Calcutta session I save a month's tour, and should take up my work in Simla in July instead of May.

I send this letter by General Duff so that he may personally explain any points on which you may desire further de-

tails. Should you wish me to submit an official application for sanction I have asked General Duff to telegraph to me to that effect, but I do not imagine that that course will be necessary, for what I propose seems to be covered by precedents and regulations, and only to require your approval.

Mr. Morley thought otherwise, and dexterously parried his correspondent's proposal:

November 7, 1907.—Your letter of September 24 rather strikes me with dismay. You do not say precisely for how long you would wish to be absent from the Government of India, but I presume that it would be for an appreciable measure of time.

It is only, I think, three or four months ago since I received, as the foundation of the case for sundry measures of repressive legislation, a strong Memorandum of yours depicting the dangers of disaffection in the Indian Army as real and of imminent, if not even actual, urgency. In the state of things so emphatically pressed on my close attention, you won't think it unnatural that I should feel uneasy at the idea of your being off the scene even for a week.

Then here is another difficulty. You represent military things upon the Executive Council of the Governor-General. What is to become of them in your absence? You will not, I think, refer me to the head of the Military Supply Department? Even if you did, I cherish the hope that this department may vanish into limbo almost before you could start. Be that as it may, military questions in the Council of the Governor-General would practically be in a state of suspended animation so long as you were away. Now I expect Indian military policy, in all its aspects, to be an object of much interest and importance for some months to come. Are we to hang it all up?

Again, is it safe to leave the Army Department—in an experimental stage, remember—to its own devices and resources? How would that coach travel without you—I don't

know whether to call you lynch-pin or mainspring? . . .

Now for health. There you have me at your mercy. Only observe that I shall get into a scrape (for there are vigilant and powerful critics here, in Parliament, and especially *out of* Parliament) for having invited you to accept an extension of your term as Commander-in-Chief. They will ask me whether I had taken into account the years of your incessant labour; and whether I was right in what I did, and in what I rejoice that, by your good will, I was able to do. Your absence even for a moderate time will give point to this.

I have written to you, quite frankly and informally, the objections that present themselves to my mind. Will you do me the kindness to turn them over?

The discussion of these important and delicate matters by writing, instead of face answering to face, is the worst of all the drawbacks to the relations between this office and the Government of India, thousands of miles away.

Kitchener, who was never unwilling to look at things from the other man's point of view, saw that Mr. Morley had the best of the argument:

December 1907.—I am very much obliged to you for your kind letter, and have asked the Viceroy to telegraph to you to withdraw my request.

I can quite see the force of the arguments you mention in your letter against my leaving India early next year. Had it been possible, I should much have liked a rest and sea-voyage, and should, I think, have come back to my work fresher and perhaps better able to deal with the many questions that have to be decided.

But, although he withdrew his proposal, he could not shake off his fever, which clung to him for some months and was proof even against the pleasant news which reached him at Christmas.

December 18, 1907.—I think this will reach you a day or

two after the New Year, and that date will bring you the bestowal of a new honour from the hands of the King. You will allow me to offer you my cordial congratulations—and my sincere wish that you may live long to wear this, and whatever other decorations may fall to you before you leave India. Your zealous interest in the field of your labours is recognised by everybody who knows enough about it to be a competent judge, and I consider myself fortunate in procuring your consent to such an extension of those labours as may suffice to bring them to a satisfactory close. Only I daresay that in military things, as in most other departments of public life, one has to learn the lesson of being content with Second Best. The politician, at any rate, finds out that his trade is an affair of second best, and to resign himself to it is the beginning of wisdom. Only not on the day of battle.

I think you know that the King himself especially favoured your decoration, and you will believe also that the King's wish was cordially seconded both by the Viceroy and myself.

To-day we hear of the death of Lord Kelvin, the most distinguished of the civil members of the Order of Merit, to which you belong on the other side. When I say most distinguished, I mean in intellectual power and versatility; for if beneficent contribution to human happiness be the test, I suppose Lord Lister would run Kelvin hard. You will wonder why I waste my time in putting to you riddles with barren answers.

I have had visits this week from General Smith-Dorrien, Malleson, and Maconchy. They all had plenty of interesting things to tell me—and I really think I shall know something about Indian problems, as they are called, perhaps by the morning of the day when I have to hand back my seals of office to the Sovereign.

The recipient set the right value on his new decoration:

I think you will realise that I prize the G.C.I.E. more as a mark of the confidence and approval of the Government than as a decoration.

I am very glad you have been able to see several officers lately either returning to England or on leave from here. I feel sure conversations with them must be advantageous.

NOTE

To the Great Lord Kitchener, High Commander-in-Chief, General Commanding the brave and powerful Army of England of hundreds of thousands of men.

I am at present in extensive good health and happiness, living at rest on the clear snow-clad mountains, taking pleasure in the all-powerful Mahadeva (lit. "Five-faced-one").

You are conducting and directing the brave army satisfactorily, like a rare turquoise.

To be brief: the Sahebs of Gyantse have sent a plate (or "table") with supports for (my) pleasure. It is made altogether equal to a pattern, without any difference, which increases my happiness beyond all thought.

To be brief: as I have said, now that all the people of England and Tibet have now and henceforth become friends, with the affection of an elder and younger brother, there will be complete happiness in your heart.

There is no need to say how strong we consider it has become. And wishing that soon the life of the friends of our benefactor may be still further strengthened (lit. "deepened") both in time and place, it gives pleasure and satisfaction to say that it will continue steadily and continuously like pure milk.

With a silk scarf. On a propitious date.

(*Seal of the* Tashi Lama.)

Address (on the back of the letter)—
To the Great Lord Kitchener, High Commander-in-Chief, General Commanding the brave and powerful Armies of England of hundreds of thousands of men.

The letter is undated.

It may be interesting to note the spelling of the Tibetan, in which the name of Lord Kitchener is transliterated:

"Lor-sqra-skyid-chi-nar."
"Lor- d- Ki- tche-ner."

CHAPTER LXXX

Although sanitary science in India had made many steps forward, enteric fever and malaria were still a scourge of the British Army and a leading cause of death and disability. The subject was much on Kitchener's mind, and at the 1905 summer meeting of Lieutenant-Generals he laid stress upon its urgent importance.

Recent discoveries in bacteriology facilitated a systematic investigation which Kitchener, after the conference of 1905, instituted into the causation and origin of these maladies; a campaign against the house-fly, with its *nidus* in the night-soil accumulated near cantonments, and the mosquito—the recognised agents of the two diseases—resulted in a most significant drop of nearly one-half in the death and sickness rates. Stringent preventive regulations were issued as to sanitation, inoculation for malaria, the purification of water, and the preservation of all food and drink from contamination; and it was peremptorily ordered that all persons—British or Native—before being employed in the preparation of any sort of eatables intended for the troops, should undergo a medical examination. Depots were also established in the hills for enteric convalescents, often carriers, who had hitherto not been sufficiently recognised as a source of danger to their comrades; and technical training in hygiene was provided for

selected N.C.O.'s and men, each of these sanitary sections being supervised by a medical officer.

Kitchener knew, however, that he had to deal with another foe far more dangerous and deadly to the men under his command, and in a Memorandum largely penned by himself [1] he urged on General and Commanding Officers that they must watch over, not only the health, but the morals of the troops; and he bade officers to set a real example to their men in their standard of life. Casting no aspersion on past methods, he said deliberately that he expected from one and all a keener sense of duty and responsibility, and a higher standard of moral courage, in order that full effect should attend the measures he advocated for dealing with a curse which was sapping the efficiency of the Army:

> The Commanding Officer of a regiment [he wrote] should realise that the primary causes leading to impurity and disease are drink and idleness, and these he should energetically combat by every means in his power. He should encourage in his men a belief in leading a good healthy life both mentally and physically, and should provide them with the means of living it.
>
> He should see that his men have plenty to do, and are fully exercised and interested in their daily work while it lasts; and when that is done he should foster a love for games and outdoor exercise of all sorts. He should check excessive drinking, and must be particularly watchful in this respect after pay-day. . . .
>
> While all Officers should do all they possibly can to prevent impurity by advice and influence, and still more by setting an example of self-restraint, we must not stop there. We must not forget that the young soldier is a thoughtless

1 A draft of a large part of this, in his own handwriting, is still extant.

youth, suddenly placed in new surroundings in a very different climate to that in which he has been brought up—with manifold temptations from the natives of the country for the smallest fraction of the rupees in his possession, and with very few healthy amusements and interests outside his barrack life; and that in these circumstances he requires the utmost protection against himself that we can afford him.

In former days the existence of this vice and the desirability of regularising it were recognised. But public opinion has put an end to this system, which had the great drawback that it might be said to—and in some cases possibly did—place temptation to be impure in the way of the young soldier. But this is, to my mind, no reason why we should step aside and cease our endeavours to combat an evil, the dangers of which we all so clearly recognise. We should not be content to let things take their course, or to seek salvation in the mere publication of cantonment laws, which, though good enough perhaps in themselves, lose all their force in the absence of sensible and regular application.

This Memorandum, which detailed the means to be adopted by cantonment magistrates as well as by combatant and medical officers,[1] was followed by an Adjutant-General's letter of June 1905, which included further instructions—chiefly on administration and sanitation—and concluded with a note that excited considerable comment at the time:

The Commander-in-Chief is aware that officers sometimes hesitate to adopt measures for the prevention of disease in cantonments owing to their fear of public opinion, and under the impression that their efforts will not be supported by

1 To the medical officers a special instruction was issued: "They should take every opportunity, while impressing on patients in a kindly manner the very serious effects of their indiscretions, to see that no special comfort or indulgence is provided for them in hospital; such patients should be made to feel that though they are there to undergo treatment, they must not look for the indulgences and additional comforts which are provided in the case of illness which they cannot avoid."

Army Headquarters. On this point His Excellency directs me to observe that he considers that public opinion was quite justified in condemning a system under which prostitutes were maintained by Government for the use of the soldiers. All recent legislation on the subject, warnings to soldiers, as well as punishments, etc., are framed with a view to the diminution of vice and to induce soldiers to adopt a higher moral tone; and the idea that vice can be prevented by allowing disease to exist in cantonments, and by regarding the liability to infection as an effective deterrent, is not and never has been the view held by persons of sound judgement.

Later on in the year Kitchener issued yet another Memorandum, appealing directly to the soldiers, in whose "Small Book" it was ordered to be inserted:

On his arrival in India, Lord Kitchener learnt with regret the very serious extent of the ravages made by venereal disease among British troops serving in this country, and at once set to work to combat its growth and spread in the Army. The results of these efforts, so far, have been encouraging; but there is a limit to what can be done in this direction by the authorities to whom the welfare of the soldier during his tour of service is entrusted, unless they receive the hearty co-operation and assistance of the men themselves, and it is in order to obtain their help that Lord Kitchener now addresses to them these remarks which he desires them to read and keep in mind during their service in India.

Lord Kitchener feels sure that new arrivals in this country, and even those of more experience, frequently suffer from want of knowledge of how to protect themselves from the dangers to which they are exposed in a strange country, and of the means by which they can best preserve their health and render themselves a credit to their corps.

The climate and conditions of life in India are unfortunately such as to create temptations greater than those

which exist in countries outside the tropics. The absence of home associations throws men more on their own resources, and deprives them of many of those helps towards resisting temptation which surround them in England. During the cold weather there may perhaps be enough work, healthy exercise, and amusement to keep men occupied, mentally and physically; but throughout the long months of great heat in the plains, time often hangs heavily on their hands, and with want of occupation comes the temptation to excessive indulgence.

It is therefore all the more necessary that those who are serving their country in India should exert to the utmost those powers of self-restraint with which every man is provided in order that he may exercise a proper control over his appetites. They should avoid any excess in liquor, on no account touch country spirits, take an active interest in their profession, and do their utmost towards making themselves really smart and efficient soldiers in every respect. They should take part in all healthy outdoor sports and games, and always keep themselves in good training and physically fit. Both mind and body [1] should be fully occupied, and a lively interest cultivated in all their surroundings. In this way, work will be found much easier, and life generally more pleasant.

Above all things, men must remember that they should do credit to their regiments; for the good name of a regiment lies in the keeping of every man belonging to it, and necessarily suffers if the men become inefficient through venereal diseases. It is discreditable, and even dishonest, that, by contracting through self-indulgence a disease which he can avoid, a man should render himself incapable of doing that work for his country which he enlisted to do.

1 In an address on higher Mohammedan education Kitchener said: "We ought to enable the youths of Mohammedan races under our rule to carry out that grand Mohammedan precept, which is also the precept of other religions, that to improve the mind and body is the duty of man to God. Education must elevate your minds, must improve your faculties of thought, must clear your vision, and make you understand your place and duty in the world."

Unless pride in their corps, and the desire to do it credit, keeps men from this danger, they must be prepared to see other regiments chosen for active service when the chance comes, and their own left behind.

It is therefore the duty of a soldier, not only to keep himself clear of disease, but also by his good example to help his comrades to avoid temptation. The older men particularly should realise their responsibilities in this respect. Very much depends on the tone and example which they set, and even if they themselves have suffered, there is all the more need that they should do their utmost to keep their younger comrades straight, and prevent them from lowering the good name of the regiment as a whole. No soldier who is unable to exercise due restraint in these matters can expect to be entrusted with command over his comrades.

Every man can by self-control restrain the indulgence of those imprudent and reckless impulses that so often lead men astray, and he who thus resists is a better soldier and a better man than the man of weaker will who allows his bodily appetites to rule him, and who lacks the strength of character to resist temptation and to refuse to follow any bad example he may see before him.

Remember the better influences of life. What would your mothers, your sisters, and your friends at home think of you if they saw you in hospital, degraded by this cause? And later on in life, when you might rightly hope to marry and settle down, it will make a difference to your own happiness and that of your family—which no words can express—if you can do so with a body clear of those loathsome diseases which, if once contracted, may be passed on to your children.

Lord Kitchener would further point out that, although the military penalties incurred by those who contract venereal diseases can only be considered as of minor importance when compared to the more dreadful and far-reaching consequences above referred to, yet men should remember that they exist and should know what they are. Promotion may be af-

fected, first-class service pay is forfeited, for it is given for efficiency, and men who have suffered from these diseases remain inefficient for long periods; guards and duties missed while in hospital have to be made good, so that the self-indulgence of those who contract disease may not throw extra work on their comrades; on their return to duty they may find all indulgences, passes, etc., withheld, and the canteen may be closed against them. Should me be invalided for venereal diseases, gratuities and pensions are liable to be affected.

Further, it must be remembered that it is impossible for long to conceal the existence of disease, and that the attempt to do so is an offence which is very severely punished.

Lord Kitchener asks all the men who compose the British Army in India, which he is proud to command, to read this Memorandum very carefully and think over these matters; let each then consider for himself whether indulgence is worth the price which has to be paid for it in disease, in punishment, in injury to the man himself, his wife and his children, in destruction of the efficiency of his corps, and in degradation of his own body and mind.

The Memorandum was no perfunctory platitude, but the outcome of the author's feelings on a dark and difficult subject. For him vice was vice, and could neither be laughed at nor licensed. His own stern self-control in no way blinded him to the well-nigh irresistible temptations which beset the soldier, and more especially the British soldier serving in the East. He looked for no moral Utopia, nor—humanly speaking—saw any real cure for a terribly real ill. But he did think, and was not slow to say, that alongside any religious influences, with which he kept himself in close touch, much might healthily be done —which unhappily had been left undone—to protect the men for whom he held himself responsible from a grave physical and moral evil.

CHAPTER LXXXI

The Commander-in-Chief's Budget speech for 1909–1910 was his swan-song in the Legislative Council. The soldier-economist had his say—a say which went to explain and justify his military administration, and to recount the reforms carried out on his initiative during the preceding six years and a half. He was able to report the complete re-armament of the Indian Artillery with quick-firing guns, and a corresponding increase of ammunition, wagons, horses, and establishments. Both this and another costly change, the re-arming of the whole of the troops with the new rifle, had been effected entirely out of India's own resources: in respect of both arms and ammunition India was nearly self-supporting.

It is strange how few people come under the fascination of finance; men are prone to talk about money—only the money must be theirs, or that of their friends, actually or potentially. The resources of a community are a dull subject, and the finances of a municipality or a State are considered exclusively the affair of financial experts.

But Kitchener was one of the few men, and certainly one of the very few soldiers, to whom finance, as such, was an attraction: [1] in the study of Indian

1 He was very pleased to hear in South Africa that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, had expressed his high opinion of his financial capabilities in all military matters. He invited Sir Michael

finance he found a mental occupation not only congenial but bracing. He was admittedly fortunate in that the inception of his reorganisation policy coincided with a period of Indian prosperity. During his seven years he had of course to cut his coat according to his cloth. He naturally took advantage of the fat years to obtain a special grant of limited duration for pressing requirements; and in the succeeding lean years curtailed expenditure wherever possible, so as to bring the normal military budget back to its former level, or even lower.

Thus the reorganisation schemes were financed by a special fixed grant spread over five years, and amounting in the aggregate to something less than £10,000,000 sterling, of which the amount spent was less than £8,250,000.

The expenditure of this special grant was distributed under three heads:

1. All special outlay *outside* the reorganisation of the personnel. A sum of rather more than £4,500,000 covered various items, of which re-arming the artillery cost £1,750,000; ordnance machinery, etc., £200,000; buildings, etc., £600,000; coast defence, £432,000, and so on.

2. The *initial* cost of the reorganisation scheme, including (*a*) less than £1,000,000 for purchase of land and building operations, and (*b*) a sum of under £2,000,000 for preparation for war.

3. The *recurring* cost of the reorganisation scheme, which amounted to over £750,000. The fifth year of the special grant, 1910, saw economies effected to the extent of £320,000.

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to act as one of the trustees for his military grant; but the arrangement was not carried out, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer favoured nothing but gilt-edged stocks for the purpose.

Invitations to farewell dinners, for which neither time nor human digestion was available, poured in and had to be regretfully declined. But a notable exception was made in the banquet at the United Services Club at Simla, when Lord Minto, after paying a tribute to one who was not only "an illustrious Commander-in-Chief, but a far-seeing and sagacious statesman, upon whose loyal support in difficult times the Viceroy could always count," alluded to the loss sustained by "a community of friends who have learnt to dissociate the characteristics of the stern soldier from the refined taste which has laid out the gardens of Wildflower Hall, and has so artistically decorated the ever-hospitable walls of Snowdon."

Kitchener, in his reply, made the point that while the younger officers could rightly long for war, and burn to show their zeal and devotion in the fiery test of battle, it would not be well that the Commander-in-Chief, who, sitting on the Viceroy's Council, takes his part in shaping the destiny of the Indian Empire, should share or allow himself to be swayed by any such consideration: "We must know and feel that for this, as for every nation, peace is the greatest of all blessings, so long as it is a peace with honour."

In September, just before laying down his command, Lord Kitchener issued his farewell order to the Army of India:

> Steady persistence will be needed to maintain even the present standard of efficiency, while that higher ideal which has not yet been reached can be attained only by continued effort. Continuity is indeed the key-word of this my last message to the Army in India—continuity as regards the end aimed at, the means by which that end is sought, and

the efforts without which nothing worth the doing can ever be accomplished. . . . One of my aims throughout my tenure of command has been the devolution of power downward throughout all ranks of officers, with a view to encouraging that personal initiative and readiness to accept responsibility which are so invaluable in war, but which cannot then be looked for unless they have been made habitual by constant exercise in peace. The response has been encouraging, but seven years is all too short a period for the formation of a mental habit throughout the whole of a great Service. I hope and believe that in time my object will be fully attained.

I specially commend the British troops in this country for the whole-hearted support they have given me in my efforts to increase their physical efficiency, and to reduce preventable disease. . . . I make it my request to them that they will permit no falling back in these matters. . . . I bid farewell to the Army in India, both British and Indian, with regret, but with full confidence in its future.

Kitchener left Simla on September 6 for Poona, where he was to hand over his command to Sir Moore O'Creagh. The whole of the population, European and Indian, turned out to bid him farewell. The troops from Jutogh voluntarily walked many miles to the cart-road down which his motor was to pass, to cheer their Chief; and at the military stations through which his special train ran troops—equally of their own free will—congregated. Soldiers in hundreds had insisted on having access to the platform, to have the last glimpse of Kitchener Sahib.

In his administration of the Army in India Kitchener kept constantly in mind the external demands which hereafter might quite conceivably be made on India's military resources. Before his arrival im-

proved communications had already diminished the historic isolation of the great Peninsula, and the menace of a Russian advance upon her north-west frontier was in some ways greater in 1902 than it had ever been before. Three years later Russia was defeated by Japan, and from that defeat there arose a new tendency to moderation at Petrograd, and a readiness to come to terms with England,[1] which issued in the Agreement over Persia in 1907. The triumph of Japan, while it gave military students much to ponder over, entailed considerations of first-rate importance. If it led directly to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, it was hailed throughout Asia—and not least in India—as the victory of an Asiatic over a European race, which broke the long spell of European dominance.

But Kitchener saw the dawn of another danger to India. Germany had quietly started a process of peaceful penetration in Asia Minor, and her more outspoken politicians and professors were already assigning to her the guardianship and eventual inheritance of the Ottoman Empire.[2] The opening up

1 Evidence is not wanting that the Russian disposition to treat with England was coloured by her recognition of the new preparedness against any aggression.

2 In 1908 Kitchener wrote to a friend:

"SIMLA, *October* 8, 1908.

"I have always, as you know, been very much interested in the Eastern question, and this recent flare-up is quite exciting. Please let me know all you can on the subject. In old days I used to know my Constantinople, Bulgaria, etc., well, and speaking Turkish gave me rather a pull in seeing what was going on behind the scenes. It seems to me that we have now a great opportunity of retrieving our position in the Moslem world. The Turkish Army is composed of some of the very best fighting material, and we have only to look at the Baghdad Railway and the conduct of Russia in Persia to see how important it is for us to support Turkey and be the one to help her to reorganise her forces.

"I do not see how much could be done except as Ambassador. That post would, however, place whoever occupies it in a position to do a great deal

of a new overland road to India was the pleasant theme of publicists who laid stress on the weakness of England's position in Egypt and India, and exalted the Kaiser's rôle of protector of the whole Mohammedan world. The Berlin-Baghdad railway was already denominated the Berlin-Byzantium-Baghdad Bahn; but Bengal and not Baghdad was to be the terminus, and Germany was indulging herself in something more than a dream of becoming mistress of India. The Kaiser might choose Morocco, at the other end of the Moslem world, for a spectacular display of strength; but the substantial danger lay in the East, where German merchants, missionaries, soldiers, and prospecting engineers were predicting the future of Prussia as an Asiatic power.

Without pretending that the peril was acute, or likely to become acute, while he was responsible for the defence of India, Kitchener watched with anxiety, if not with alarm, every move of this coming new competitor in Asia; it was borne in upon him before he left England in 1902 that the Kaiserliche policy rendered war between England and Germany a contingency to be reckoned with in the East no less than in the West.

And so it came about that, if the Anglo-Russian Agreement prevented his immediate defence policy from being put to the proof, his handiwork enabled India five years after he left her to make her great Imperial contribution to the Great War.

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at the present juncture, and unless we have a really good man there, Russia or Germany will assuredly pull the chestnuts out of the fire.

"I still hold the rank and Sultan's Commission of a Lt.-General in the Turkish Army, and should rather like to revisit old haunts and see old friends, but it is not easy to see how this could be done.

"Remember the extent of our influence at Stamboul very seriously affects our position in this country as well as in Afghanistan and Egypt. I hope we shall not let the chance slip."

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER LXXXI

"But for Lord Kitchener's work, India could never possibly have given the great help she has to the Empire during the War." So wrote a famous General of the Indian Army, who fought in France, Flanders, and the Dardanelles.

The first call on England's Asiatic Dependency was for two complete infantry and two cavalry divisions to be sent to France—a call which fifteen years earlier would have caused dire consternation. But Kitchener had left India mapped out in nine divisional areas, each calculated to contain a complete fighting division ready to go anywhere, with a definite allotment of troops to ensure the internal safety of the country. Thus, in quick reply to his own call from the War Office, the Indian Government could send off smoothly, swiftly, and fully equipped, the divisions immediately needed for France, the first convoy sailing on August 25, 1914. Without the organisation set afoot by Kitchener, the divisions—if sent at all—would have been formed by a miscellaneous collection of regiments drawn from all parts of India, with hurriedly thrown together staffs, transport, and departmental details.

This initial and substantial despatch of troops for France had scarcely been effected when fresh requisitions at a few days' interval were made and met for further divisions to proceed to East Africa and Egypt. The contingent for East Africa consisted of one complete British and Indian brigade with additional Indian troops to the approximate strength of an infantry division. As, on account of the fly, horses could not be maintained in East Africa, no mounted troops were asked for, except one Indian mountain battery. To Egypt, with equal absence of fuss or friction, was sent the equivalent of three Indian infantry divisions.

Then, when India might have been thought to be drained dry, came the call to Baghdad, with the prompt response of a complete and highly organised division[1] of all arms,

1 The 6th Poona Division.

the Indian authorities providing the transport—and, be it remembered, India was the while sending home the whole residue of the British infantry, excepting nine battalions, in exchange for a much smaller number of Territorial battalions.

At the time when the Mesopotamian Expedition left India no question had been raised as to any advance beyond Basrah, and up to the capture of Basrah it is generally admitted that the Expedition was a complete success in its conception, organisation, and equipment—a success which was all the more striking because India's powers were tried far beyond anything that had been contemplated. In ordinary times such an expedition as that sent to Baghdad would have been prosecuted with the whole military strength of India, whereas in the present case it had to be furnished out of resources already drawn upon and depleted by three previous demands.

CHAPTER LXXXII

On September 12, three days after he had formally laid down the Indian command, Kitchener, with his A.D.C., Captain FitzGerald,[1] sailed from Tuticorin. For the time being he was High Commissioner-designate and Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief in the Mediterranean in succession to the Duke of Connaught—the appointment was never actually taken up—but he was free for a tour he had long desired to make in the course of which he would respond to the invitation [2] to pronounce on the defences of Australia.

China and Japan were Kitchener's personal objectives. On the road to the Far East the forts, harbour, and strategic points were inspected at Singapore, and at Saigon the significant compliment was paid of a parade of French Anamese troops.

1 Captain O. A. G. FitzGerald, 18th Bengal Lancers, in 1906 replaced Major F. Maxwell, V.C., as Aide-de-Camp to the Commander-in-Chief. Thereafter, except for a few months, when he had to return to India from Australia, FitzGerald was scarcely ever apart from his Chief for a single day. Sir Henry Rawlinson joined the party in Peking.

2 Mr. Cook, speaking on the Defence Bill in the Commonwealth Parliament on September 21, 1909, said: "We have invited one of the best soldiers of the Empire—perhaps the Empire's most celebrated organiser: I allude to Lord Kitchener—to visit us and advise us as to the lines upon which we ought to proceed in reference to all matters making for the organisation and efficiency of our army. He will come here, and we shall ask him frankly to look at us as we are, to tell us freely what are our defects, to suggest remedies, and to do everything that is necessary to put us upon the right track to thorough army efficiency. . . . Lord Kitchener's advice will be welcomed—it will be most valuable to us."

By the beginning of October the tourists had arrived at Shanghai, a day having been spent in Hong-Kong and Canton. At Shanghai Kitchener was duly impressed with the gold deposits of the Hong-Kong and Shanghai Bank, was pleased with the local volunteers—a congeries of nationalities making up a battalion, which he inspected at his own request—and was attracted by some local collections of Chinese porcelain.

From Shanghai the party proceeded to Peking, where the Imperial Guard was turned out for the British General's inspection, an unprecedented honour for a foreign visitor to the Chinese capital. Professional duties were then resumed, and, accompanied by Viscount Terauchi, the Japanese Minister of War, Kitchener travelled into Manchuria, to see the battle-fields of the Russo-Japanese War. He was familiar with every incident of the campaign through the copious notes he had received from Sir Ian Hamilton; but the visit to the flat country where modern trench-warfare had been carried on five years earlier was not forgotten when trench-warfare was hideously elaborated five years later. The battle-field at Mukden was so large—a strip of it was ninety miles long—that the party only had time to examine the smallest though most important portion, a part of the northern flank; but at Port Arthur, on the return from the interior, it was possible to make a more detailed examination of that part of the field. Some time was spent at 203-metre Hill, where a Japanese officer of heavy artillery described the attack on Port Arthur, and explained in detail the disposition of the artillery. He admitted—in reply to Kitchener's suggestion—that Port Arthur under

more vigorous treatment might have fallen three months earlier, and that the Japanese had been strategically wrong in not sooner attacking the Hill, but explained that they had been constrained by the fear of a counter-attack exposing their communications on the Peninsula.

In China Kitchener's interest in art rivalled his interest in war. At Mukden, where a Chinese wooden house, with a circular hall and chambers all round, had been specially constructed for his reception, he indulged himself with many happy hours among houses full of rare china. The Imperial collection itself was surrounded by pagodas, and its precise whereabouts was a supposed secret. The distinguished visitors were introduced to it through a labyrinth of passages, and were closely watched by a Chinese official attended by an armed guard. The Regent had asked Kitchener to accept four specimens of his famous "peach-bloom" china, but had not facilitated a selection by having any light in the room or any dust removed from the hundred and fifty pieces from which the choice was to be made. It was therefore due as much to good luck as to good management that the vases chosen—now family heirlooms—should have been pronounced by experts as of the finest quality.

From Port Arthur the journey was through Korea to Japan, where for months Kitchener had been looked for with feverish curiosity. At every railway station children brought from long distances and provided with miniature British flags were drawn up in line, and as the special train very slowly passed through, the great soldier appeared at the window to receive a remarkable ovation. In a land where

patriotism is imbibed with mother's milk, it was obviously—and indeed avowedly—intended that the children should be brought face to face with a man whose service for his country was to be an object-lesson to them.

In Japan Kitchener and his staff were treated as official guests of the nation; a palace at Tokio was set aside for their use, a ceremonial reception was accorded to them, an invitation to attend the Imperial Manœuvres was pressed on them, and a luncheon was given by the Mikado, who conferred on his guest the Grand Cordon of the Rising Sun.[1] At Nokoto, as at other places on the way to Yokohama, where he embarked for Shanghai, more crowds of cheering children were assembled, and a little—but very little—porcelain and woodwork was bought. Kitchener made no secret of his preference for Chinese over Japanese art, as of his preference for Japanese over Chinese soldiers.[2]

By the end of October he was back at Hong-Kong and sailed thence on a small Dutch steamer for Java,[3] where the Dutch loaded him with hospitality and insisted on his visiting every inch of their beautiful

1 Kitchener was also the guest of honour at a banquet given by the Maple Club, where he was a little embarrassed at having to sit cross-legged and spear oysters from a saucer.

2 "*November* 20, 1909.—I have been having a most enjoyable time in Japan, where every one did their best to make my visit pleasant and thoroughly succeeded. I was much struck by the excellence of the Japanese Infantry. I have never seen better; their cavalry was bad, but their Staff work well done. I only wish the spirit of our people and our Army Administration was more like that of the Japanese." (Kitchener to Lady Salisbury.)

3 "We spent the afternoon puzzling out how we could get from Japan to Australia *via* the Dutch East Indies, which I got Lord Kitchener to say he will visit. It is a pity not to see such interesting places when one is in the part of the world, and going by a Dutch steamer we visited about a dozen small islands between Java and New Guinea, at one of which we shall be picked up by a cruiser from the Australian station." (Letter from FitzGerald.)

island. Another small Dutch steamer was chartered for the voyage from Java to Port Darwin, which was reached a day later than scheduled, as the boat ran ashore on an island reputed to be the home of cannibals.

There was an undesigned fitness in the fact that Kitchener first set foot in Australia at Port Darwin. That little town is the terminus of the ocean cable and of a proposed trans-continental railway which comes to an inglorious and premature end a hundred odd miles inland; it is a port with little shipping, a city with hardly any citizens, and the capital of a huge country with hardly any population. The empty and undeveloped Northern Territory had long been recognised as one of the most vulnerable points in the military position of the Commonwealth, and its weakness could not fail to strike Kitchener's eyes when he arrived there on December 21.

Ten days later, after spending Christmas at Thursday Island, Kitchener received a great welcome from the people of Brisbane. On January 3 he watched the manœuvres of the Queensland troops, but committed himself to no comment on their work; and at an official banquet to him that evening he simply remarked on the progressive spirit and enterprise he saw around him.

Two days afterwards he travelled south to Sydney, where the Minister of Defence stated that "the simple reason for Lord Kitchener's visit was that in many lands, in the most difficult situations, he had blazed many a track along which the peoples concerned were marching to prosperity, safety, and security, and the Government felt it could not do better than go to this source for the purpose of formu-

lating a scheme of defence which would enable us to hold this continent for ourselves and the Empire." Kitchener replied that Australia must rely in the first instance on the Navy to keep communications open with the rest of the Empire, but that she must have sufficient land defences for the Navy to be free to do its work.

He inspected the Liverpool Camp and watched some field operations, when he bluntly superseded the set plan and instituted a fresh tactical scheme—an attack on a convoy in a hilly bush country. The result was indecisive, but the day's work spoke to the quality of the Australian troops.[1]

Before leaving Sydney he was urged to address the State Parliament, and in the course of a very terse straightforward oration recommended that "the country should support its defenders by taking a great pride in them and by insisting on the abolition of all that savours of shams and uselessness."

Three days later, on January 11, at Melbourne, after having unveiled a memorial at Bathurst to those who had fallen in South Africa, he gave—what Australia had been eagerly awaiting—the first public indication of his judgement of the military qualities of the Antipodes. It was almost wholly favourable:

> In no other country in the world, as far as I know, do the young men show such natural military qualification on which to base their military career. A great deal of the training that, in ordinary course, would have to be supplied to obtain an efficient soldier is already part of the daily life of many of your lads; and the work done in the cadet corps is a most excellent preparation for the more serious adult training

1 The local paper noticed that Lord Kitchener frequently put his hand on the shoulder of an old soldier and talked to him like a re-discovered friend.

which will eventually turn out your citizen soldiers. I do not wish on this occasion, before my inspection is complete or my ideas crystallised, to say anything definite about the organisation I would propose; but I think I may mention shortly a few points that I consider are of importance. In the first place, I think you should carefully preserve the excellent natural characteristics of young Australia, which I hope will always remain a feature in the military life of your young men. I have heard it mentioned that discipline may be wanting, but I do not think you need fear this amongst thoroughly trained Australian troops. They may have their own special methods and manner of expressing themselves; but, gentlemen, discipline does not depend upon any shibboleth of that sort. Discipline is undoubtedly a most essential and most important part of all military life, and it is absolutely necessary for success in war. I feel sure every true Australian soldier will know and realise that unhesitating, uncritical, willing obedience to all lawful authority does not entail servility to any individual. It is, to my mind, essential that you should establish a high-class primary military educational system, in order that your officers, particularly the instructional officers, should be thoroughly grounded in their profession, so as to be able to teach both officers and men with the authority of complete military knowledge; I cannot help feeling strongly that no second-rate military standard in this country will appeal with any permanence to the people who under the Bill will take part in your military development. You may get on for a time, but unless you place your ideal of the national forces high you will find that the day will come when the security of this country will have degenerated to a very low ebb. Soldiers must take a pride in their efficiency and respect themselves as a fighting force, thoroughly educated, trained, and equipped, and ready for the field. There is no reason, as far as I can see, why the national forces of Australia should not make their standard of efficiency on a par with, if not higher than, those of the military Powers in Europe or elsewhere.

CHAPTER LXXXIII

KITCHENER remained at Melbourne for a fortnight; he saw much of the Victorian troops, witnessed some manœuvres, and was in constant consultation with the Commonwealth Ministers[1] regarding the resources of the Dominions. He left Melbourne on January 30 for Adelaide, stayed there twenty-four hours and went on to Perth, where he laid a heavy finger on the lack of systematic railway communication of Australia:

It seems to me, gentlemen, that one of the great needs of Australia is systematic, statesmanlike, and comprehensive railway extension. Trunk lines opening up communication and developing the fertile districts in the interior of this vast country would undoubtedly stimulate more than anything else the growth of your population, as well as fostering trade and considerably increasing your means of defence. At present, Australia's expenditure on railway construction appears to be often spasmodic, as well as unduly influenced by purely local conditions.

The hint was taken, reinforced by plain words as to the dangerous isolation of West Australia; railway construction on the great scale, which had lan-

1 The Ministers were somewhat startled at their visitor's knowledge of the geographical resources of the country, which one of them admitted in many respects exceeded their own. As soon as the then Commander-in-Chief received authority to accept Mr. Deakin's invitation he had search made for every book on Australia that Calcutta could produce. He also sent forward two officers to regulate his programme and to learn such local facts and figures as he thought he would require.

guished for many years, was now pushed on with such vigour that within ten years the first great trans-continental line from Perth to the East was opened for traffic.

Kitchener re-visited Adelaide, stayed in camp with the troops of South Australia, and then proceeded to Tasmania. His final inspections were the troops at Hobart and Launceston; he then returned to Melbourne, handed in his report to the Government, and on February 13 sailed for New Zealand.[1]

His Report, which took the form of a memorandum on the defence of Australia, was published a few days after his departure. Mr. Deakin, the Commonwealth Prime Minister, remarked: "The Government has appealed to Caesar, and we shall be prepared to defer to Caesar's judgement." As a matter of fact there was little public criticism of his recommendations, and the public press generally expressed approval of them.

Kitchener in his Report reminded Australia that in time of war the British Naval Forces might need to be concentrated in some one theatre of operations: "Consequently, in seas remote from that theatre our command of the sea might be temporarily suspended; and it might be some time before our supremacy was assured in all waters. It was the duty of all the self-governing Dominions to provide a military force adequate, not only to deal promptly with any attempt at invasion, but also to ensure local safety and public

1 He wrote to a friend: "I have just finished here and am starting to-day for New Zealand. It has been rather hard work, not so much from the military point of view, but on account of the innumerable receptions by mayors and others. The other day, after travelling all night in the train, I was told we should have breakfast in a hotel at 7:30. Forty people sat down. We drank the King in cold coffee dregs, then three long speeches to propose my health, and a short reply from me."

confidence until our superiority at sea has been decisively and comprehensively asserted. . . . The Home Forces should be so organised as to compel an enemy contemplating an invasion to make the attempt on such a scale as to be unable to evade our Naval Forces."

Kitchener pronounced the existing forces of Australia inadequate in numbers, training, organisation, and munitions of war. The danger of want of population and consequent ineffective occupation in many parts of the country was very serious and even perilous to the stability of the Commonwealth. The railways, which had naturally been constructed to facilitate the occupation of the interior by settlers, were precisely for that reason more favourable to the invader than to the defender.

He stated that the young men of Australia were good fighting material and full of zeal, as he had found during the South African War. He had noticed in their camps the great keenness among all ranks to render themselves efficient, and to apply their knowledge to practical conditions of work. These qualities were indispensable, but not sufficient to enable a force to take the field against thoroughly trained regular troops with any chance of success. They needed regular training to withstand a regular army. The training he had seen in the camps "indicated a distinct tendency to go too fast, and to neglect essential preliminaries of training for more advanced studies than the troops engaged were capable of carrying out properly." He advised the formation of a land force of 80,000 men—half to defend the cities and ports, and half to be a force to operate as a mobile striking force anywhere in Australia. This

force should consist of 84 battalions of infantry, 28 regiments of light horse, 56 batteries of artillery, and 14 companies of engineers. The annual cost would be little more than the amount Australia was already spending.

He also recommended the division of the country into various military "areas"—each providing a definite proportion of a fighting unit and put in charge of a trained instructional officer with assistants. Ten areas would form one group under a superior officer. The areas would depend on density of population. He urged the establishment of a military college on the model of West Point,[1] and of a Staff Corps to be entirely drawn from the Military College.

The Australian Defence Act of the previous year had made provision for the compulsory military training of every young and able-bodied male between the ages of 18 and 26, with a previous training as a cadet from 12 to 18. This system was generally approved by Kitchener, with certain additions and amendments, as providing the basis of a citizen army which would in time become a powerful force.

The memorandum shows in every line that Australian military interests had been treated from the standpoint of Australian home defence,[2] but deep in

1 "Any political interference with the management of such institution, in which disciplinary training forms an important part, and the efficiency of which is so essential to the defence of Australia, should be strictly avoided." The College was duly established at Duntroon, and a Naval College on similar lines at Sydney.

2 "The new Defence Act will give sufficient numbers to defend the country effectively if the Force provided under it is efficiently trained, organised, and equipped. It must, however, be distinctly recognised that a National Force maintained at a high standard of efficiency can only be produced by the work of years, and that such work must be steady and continuous; any divergence from the policy decided on may, and probably will, lead to chaos and useless expenditure of money. If plans and essential preparations have been deferred until an emergency arises, it will then be

the writer's own mind there lay a much graver question, which had perhaps hardly occurred to his genial Australian hosts. He had long foreseen that the day would come when the whole strength of the Empire must be concentrated against an aggressive foreign Power, and he was quite consciously preparing for the test.

On February 17 Kitchener arrived at the Bluff in the South Island of New Zealand, and proceeded to Dunedin, where he at once claimed a family connection with the colony. "I feel I am not a stranger coming amongst you, for my father owned property in the neighbourhood and my brother worked amongst you in this locality for some years. I have had too the great pleasure of meeting my sister here."

He was seen at Christchurch, Port Lyttelton, Wellington, Auckland, and Napier, and at each place closely inspected the local troops, veterans and cadets, besides the defence works at Tairoa Heads and Harbours. He could be drawn into few remarks, though constantly pressed for them, but exclaimed with something like indignation at Fort Jervois in Port Lyttelton: "This fort is obsolete; it must have been built from a text-book." At Johnsonville representatives of the old fighting race of New Zealand were gathered to present an address of welcome. One of the Maori Members of Parliament began to read the address, which began, "Welcome! Welcome! Welcome! Brave one, son of the Great God of War, Tutenganahan," but he went on to read it in English.

found too late to act, because the strain of passing from peace to war will entirely absorb the energies of all engaged, even when every possible contingency has been foreseen."

Kitchener at once interrupted him with, "No, please let me have the Maori. I can read the English for myself," and the musical tongue of the old race of "The Long White Cloud" was at once substituted.

Kitchener found in New Zealand a fine match for the manhood of Australia, and at Christchurch voiced his admiration:

> It will [he said] be a source of the utmost gratification to me in after years if I can be associated with a measure that will enable the splendid young manhood of New Zealand to render themselves thoroughly efficient for the defence of this country, and able to take their share in the maintenance and honour and solidarity of the grand old Empire to which we all belong.

He urged, in a discussion of the military position with the *Times* correspondent, that New Zealand and Australia were largely interdependent in a military sense, since an enemy who established himself in the one country would be a standing menace to the other. In a political sense the Commonwealth and Dominion had always insisted on their absolute independence of each other, but the military lesson was too clear to be neglected. His report on the defence of New Zealand was presented to that Government on March 10 and followed the lines of his memorandum on Australia. And in a letter to Sir Joseph Ward, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, he emphasised the necessity for holding political and military interests apart:

> It appears to me that for your land forces New Zealand and Australia should adopt homogeneous military systems, in order to be able to efficiently support one another in the event of national danger. At the risk of

repetition I wish again to emphasise the importance of placing the ideal of your defence on as high a standard of efficiency as possible, in order that the men serving, as well as the public, may have a just pride in the fighting value of the force, and so insist upon the observance of the important principle that defence should be outside party politics, and not used by individuals for political purposes.

"We are given directions how to train the men, but where they are to come from is left to the imagination." So ran the only critical contemporary observation. The rock face of hard fact was to be the answer before many years had passed.

On March 16, 1910, Kitchener left Wellington, New Zealand, by the *Mokora* for Rarotonga and Tahiti; at the latter island he changed into the *Mariposa* for San Francisco, at which port he arrived on April 7.[1] That the United States had prepared a right royal welcome was evident from the start, for Mr. Gillette, the Governor of California, at a banquet in Kitchener's honour on the night of his arrival, described him grandiloquently as "the greatest general of the greatest army of the world."

After a day in San Francisco and a short trip through the Yosemite Valley, Kitchener proceeded east. During his hour and a half in Chicago he was mobbed by an enthusiastic crowd and interviewed by a local lady journalist; on April 15 he reached New York, and the following day he visited West Point, an institution for which he had always expressed the most profound admiration and which he constantly

1 "Off San Francisco, *April* 7, 1910.—I am looking forward to seeing you all again. I have managed to get along alone all right, but it is rather dull travelling twenty-one days without any news at all and this ocean is not very well named, particularly when it has small boats like this one to toss about. I am afraid I shall be rather worried by reporters in the States, but it will not last long." (To Lady Salisbury.)

held up for example. In deference to his wish, there were neither escort nor salutes; it was a simple inspection by a professional soldier of a factory of professional soldiers in the making.

A delightful day spent over the famous Altman Collection, a treat which for years Kitchener had promised himself, was preceded on April 18 by a banquet given in his honour by the Pilgrims—the club which confers a kind of unofficial order of merit by its *cachet;* two days later he left for England on the *Oceanic.* An interviewer seized him at the last moment with the inevitable demand for his impressions. "I have found New York," said Kitchener, "to be wonderful and delightful. So many things have impressed me that I hardly know which to mention. I think, however, I am perfectly safe in saying that New York should be proud of her beautiful women." With this perhaps unexpected tribute closed the rapid rush through the United States.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER LXXXIII

Prior to the adoption of Kitchener's scheme in 1911 Australia's adult force had consisted of one Infantry Division (twelve battalions) and other details of Light Horse, Fortress Troops, etc., raised and maintained in the States and districts from which the 1st Division Australian Imperial Force was later raised.

EMBARKATIONS FROM AUSTRALIA FOR THE GREAT WAR, BY ARMS

Infantry	210,981	Light Horse	30,365
Machine-guns	4,476	Veterinary	378
Tunnellers	3,970	Flying Corps	2,275
Artillery	23,887	Wireless	434
A.A.M.C.	12,945	Cyclists	570
A.A.S.C.	9,735	Trench mortars	1,218
Engineers	9,950	Chaplains	386

Transport Officers	531	Miscellaneous arms returned to Australia	2,555
A.A.N.S.	2,054		
General reinforcements	15,071	Total	331,781

TOTAL ENLISTMENTS INCLUSIVE OF NAVAL AND MILITARY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE TO PACIFIC

Naval, 3,856 Military, 412,953 Total, 416,809

EMBARKATIONS FROM AUSTRALIA ACCORDING TO PLACES OF BIRTH

Victoria	92,553	United Kingdom	64,221
New South Wales	88,250	New Zealand	4,214
Queensland	28,253	Other British Countries	2,246
South Australia	27,761	Foreign Countries	3,137
Western Australia	8,042		
Tasmania	13,104	Total	331,781

ENLISTMENTS IN THE AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE ACCORDING TO STATES TO 1.9.18

New South Wales	161,821	Western Australia	32,028
Victoria	111,305	Tasmania	15,262
Queensland	57,084		
South Australia	34,566	Total	412,066

The scheme which New Zealand adopted followed closely on the same lines as that of Australia; and from New Zealand there sailed 100,444 of all ranks to bear a noble part in the Great War.

CHAPTER LXXXIV

The *Oceanic* arrived at Plymouth on April 26, and two days later Kitchener had what proved to be his last audience with King Edward, who presented him with the Field-Marshal's bâton and—what was almost equally agreeable—absolved him from his promise to assume the unnecessary and unsatisfactory Mediterranean Command.

Just before leaving India he had written to a friend:

Mr. Haldane offered me the Mediterranean Command, but I refused it. Lord Morley tried pressure and this I resisted. Then they brought in the King. He wired me very strongly urging my acceptance. I said I had already refused for reasons given, but as His Majesty's wishes were commands to me I placed myself in his hands. After some time for consideration he wired that I should accept for a short time under new conditions, so I had nothing else to do and had to wire to Mr. Haldane that in deference to His Majesty's wishes I would accept. If the Government play the King we poor soldiers are done and can only obey, at least such are my principles. I think it is rather hard on me, as I wanted a time to myself and had no wish to replace the Duke of Connaught in a billet which he found a fifth wheel on the coach, but I do not see that I could have done anything else. I hope the Duke will understand that it has been no wish of mine and contrary to every inclination and interest I have to follow him in the Mediterranean.

The reversion to the Viceroyalty of India was just then uppermost in the King's mind, who pressed on the Government his earnest wish that Kitchener should succeed and walk closely in the steps of Lord Minto. The Government knew that the public would not allow Kitchener to stand idle in the market-place, and knew also that the post at Malta, already discredited by the resignation of the Duke of Connaught, was wholly unworthy of his abilities, for which India alone seemed to offer full scope. But on his appointment to India the Government were divided. The majority of the Cabinet were indeed more occupied with the constitutional crisis at home than with Indian affairs. The ultimate decision rested with Lord Morley; the Prime Minister was ready to back Morley's choice, though he made it known that personally he would be pleased if the lot fell on Kitchener. But the Secretary for India could not brace himself to the idea. Apart from his inherent objection to soldiers as soldiers, he disliked intensely the idea of appointing a soldier to a post normally held by a civilian, more particularly since "the impression made in India by sending your greatest soldier to follow reforms would make them look a practical paradox." With Kitchener himself he was personally friendly, and apparently agreeably surprised. "I was a good deal astonished," he wrote to Lord Minto, "for I had expected a silent, stiff, moody hero. Behold, he was the most cheerful and cordial and outspoken of men, and he hammered away loud and strong, with free gestures and high tones. He used the warmest language, as to which I was in no need of any emphasis, about yourself; it was very agreeable to hear, you may be certain."

An audience with the King, who earnestly urged him to nominate Kitchener, and a strong personal recommendation from Lord Minto, did little to reduce the Minister's reluctance; he would do no more than promise to reconsider the subject and pronounce on it a month later. Before the month was over King Edward was lying in state in Westminster Hall.

Early in the new reign the question was revived, but Lord Morley's objections remained as strong as ever, and he backed them with the threat of resignation if Kitchener should be sent to Calcutta. The threat was effectual. A constitutional crisis had been postponed only by the King's death, and Mr. Asquith preferred the unemployment of Lord Kitchener to the loss of Lord Morley.

A day or two after the death of King Edward and when the political storm was stilled for the time by the outburst of national sorrow, one of Kitchener's friends remarked to him, "The King has died at the psychological moment." "Not the psychological moment for me," was the reply. It was true. If King Edward had lived a few weeks longer, it is thinkable that the honest, if rather far-fetched, doubts of the Minister would have been overcome, and that a Viceroy would have been taken direct from the Army List.

But the wheel of time comes full circle in the end. Had Kitchener succeeded Lord Minto, he would have been in India when the war with Germany broke out, and he could scarcely have left the East to crown his career by the raising of the New Armies. When Mr. Asquith accepted Lord Morley's exclusion of an eminent soldier as such from the Indian Viceroyalty, he was unconsciously preparing the way for the

same soldier to become his colleague in an office scarcely less dedicated by precedent to civilians.

After thirty-seven years of constant work Kitchener was to enjoy something like a holiday. The summer and early autumn were leisurely spent in the country in England and Ireland, and after King Edward's funeral he was not seen in public until October. At a Town Planning Conference, revelling in his rank of F.R.I.B.A., he recalled the contrast between Old and New Khartum:

> The old Khartum was an African pest-house, in which every tropical disease thrived and was rampant. Now malaria is almost unknown, though mosquito curtains are not in use, and last year there were only eleven cases of malaria in a town of fifty thousand inhabitants. I do not think that such results have been achieved in any other British dependency, and this excellent work in Khartum does not stand alone in the Sudan, where sanitary conditions generally prevail and demonstrate the thorough efficiency of the administration of the country.

At Middlesex Hospital, when distributing the prizes at the Medical School, he urged the students to study tropical medicine, and, remarking on the fact that soldiers and doctors had often to work in close contact, he suggested that they should pay some attention to the connection between army discipline and medical progress.

This speech to the students was made at the request of the President of the Hospital, Prince Francis of Teck, one of the brothers of Queen Mary, who had served under his command in the Sudan and South Africa, who had been one of the few admitted to the intimacy of friendship, and at whose funeral

Kitchener was to be a pall-bearer only three weeks later.

One opportunity of retaining the services of the new Field-Marshal could scarcely be missed. General Botha, speaking early in October on the question of South African Defence, had been forward to say that the advice of his former opponent should be taken on all that pertained to the safeguarding of the Empire. A few weeks later a seat on the Committee of Imperial Defence was offered to Kitchener and by him accepted.

CHAPTER LXXXV

As his new duties need not be immediately assumed, Kitchener, rather dreading an English winter, to which he had been a stranger almost since boyhood, decided to revisit Egypt and make a trip to British East Africa. Early in November he left London for Constantinople, but cut short a proposed stay in Turkey, and wrote to Lady Salisbury from Cairo:

I went from Vienna to Constantinople. Things are not going well there for us; in fact we are out of it altogether, and the German is allowed to do as he likes. There is a good deal of discontent, and I should say a row of some sort, probably war, must be the outcome of it all before long. I was rather afraid my presence might attract attention and might mean something, though I refused to see any of the Young Turks, so after three days I thought it wiser to go on to Alexandria. It has been very pleasant in Egypt as in every station. Besides officials there were a lot of native officers and soldiers who had served with me and who seemed really glad to see me again.

He gave some time and attention at Khartum to the Cathedral and Gordon College,[1] and then went

1 Six months later, in a letter published in the *Times* on May 15, 1911, Kitchener appealed for £4000 for Khartum Cathedral, in order "adequately to represent our religion in an outlying portion of the Empire, and give the hard-working British officials in the Sudan a permanent consecrated church in which to worship God."

on board a steamer placed at his disposal by the Sudan Government, from which FitzGerald wrote:

> It is most luxuriously comfortable, cabins and dining-room all mosquito-proof; the bathrooms with their long baths are perhaps the greatest comfort. To come in after a hard day in the jungle to all this comfort is a style of shooting to which I am foreign. We steam up along this great river and three of its tributaries, the Arab, Zeraf, and Ateor, through country of every description. Sometimes the thick jungle comes down to the water's edge and one can only see the few animals that happen to be by the river; at others huge grass plains stretching right away to the horizon absolutely covered with game, antelope of many kinds, giraffes and elephants, while in places the water swarms with hippopotami. So far we have bagged elephants, buffalo, hippo, and six different kinds of antelope. We are now on our way to shoot for elephant, etc., just north of the Lado Enclave, and then for the white rhinoceros in the Enclave itself.

The tour was planned to include a march to Lake Albert Nyanza, occupying about nine days at fourteen miles a day; then four days by steamer, followed by nine days' marching to Lake Victoria Nyanza and across to Port Florence, the terminus of the Uganda Railway. By the end of February the journey was made, and Kitchener had travelled by way of Nairobi to Mombasa. On his road through British East Africa his observation of the country determined him to apply for land in the Protectorate; he then and there formed the idea that some years hence, when his public career was over, he would spend his summers at his Kentish home and in his winters seek the warmth of East Africa.

The intention could never be carried out, but the land was bought, in conjunction with three friends

—Major McMurdo, Major Leggatt, and FitzGerald. Kitchener during his tenure of office at Cairo took a keen and active interest in his tropical property, and even in the last two years of his life—when Secretary of State for War—he would snatch an occasional hour to discuss its improvement and all the possibilities of its cultivation. The death of McMurdo in April 1914 was a great grief as it was a great loss to the partners in the enterprise; Kitchener made up his mind to take over the other fourth share of the estate—his whole interest in which he bequeathed to FitzGerald—and an important development of the property was the theme of a long business conversation between the three on the day before Kitchener and FitzGerald went to their death.

Before leaving East Africa, however, in 1911 Kitchener could do little more than apply for a land grant to the Governor, Sir Percy Girouard; for on arrival at the coast he received an intimation that the King desired him to command the troops in London at the forthcoming Coronation. The order compelled him to hasten his return to England, and he sailed from Mombasa on March 7 in the German liner *Feldmarschall*.

On his way back to England he stayed a day or two in Venice at Lady Layard's house, where the German Emperor, who was also in Venice at the time, took the opportunity of calling upon him; it so happened that he met the Kaiser once more in London a few weeks later, at a luncheon on May 18, at Lord Haldane's house. The two men never saw each other again.

The next two months were mainly occupied with the arrangements for the Coronation on June 22.

Ceremonial functions were not Kitchener's hobby, but he was determined that nothing should be left undone which could be done to provide for the dignity of the occasion, the comfort of the troops, and the safety of the people. The Coronation orders to the troops made up a weighty volume of 212 pages, and covered every detail which could connect the Army with the ceremony. There was a tendency to criticise rather than to appreciate the thoroughness which led to the erection of barriers between the side and main streets through which the procession passed, and which could be closed if at any time, in the opinion of the police, the size of the crowd and the press of people became dangerous. This was a new feature in the public life of England, and the London crowd, proverbially good-tempered and well-behaved, were a little inclined to resent these precautions as an infringement of their cherished liberty.

Kitchener had no misgiving that the crowd would get out of hand or misbehave itself, but he knew that a crowd may be a danger to itself; and he remembered the terrible disaster at the ill-starred Coronation in Russia. Whether the barriers kept some timorous souls away or not, the crowd of sightseers, both for the Coronation itself and for the longer processional ride the day following, was enormous; but no casualties were incurred. The military arrangements, which compared favourably with precedent, were carried through without a hitch, and within an hour of the conclusion of the service in the Abbey, Kitchener, his work done, his reports in, was receiving one or two friends at his flat in Whitehall.

The excitement of the Coronation having subsided, and Kitchener having been introduced to the House

of Lords by Lord Morley and Lord Milner, public attention was again drawn to the inability or unwillingness of the Government to employ his services. A national talent was being folded in a napkin. Questions were asked from time to time in the House of Commons, to which indefinite answers were returned; the newspapers enlarged on the subject, and in a leading article the *Times* regretted the position, ascribing it to Kitchener's refusal to accept power without responsibility.

Two events occurred at short intervals which served to underline a popular protest. Ten days after the Coronation the Kaiser had despatched the *Panther* to Agadir, and it was evident that the German Government was again preparing to undertake an aggressive policy in Morocco and the Mediterranean. Ten days before the Coronation it was announced that Kitchener had accepted a directorship of the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway. The contrast could not escape comment.

The procedure of the German Government made it clear that the whole question of Mediterranean policy was to be tested afresh; the phrases of German professors and German newspapers made it equally clear that the whole question of African colonisation was to be raised. Since Germany postulated the necessity of an eventual physical connection between her Eastern and Western Colonies in Africa, in contradistinction to the Rhodes policy, never formally abandoned by England, of a Cape to Cairo Railway or a linking up of the northern and southern British spheres in South Africa, compromise could scarcely prevail.[1] Germany clamoured her demands, and al-

[1] A precisely similar position as regards colonial expansion had arisen in America in the eighteenth century, the French line of colonisation

though the solidity of the Entente defeated her for the moment on the main Moroccan question, she secured the cession of a substantial strip of French African territory, and the policy of Danegeld seemed certain to be revived when opportune in Berlin. If German expectations had not been keyed so extravagantly high the Agadir incident would have been scored as a pure victory, since Germany, and Germany alone, derived indubitable profit from the episode in an enlargement of her West African possessions.

The British Government, without any ambition for new spheres of influence, was determined that its footholds should in no wise be weakened by Germany, and remembered that if Berlin could interfere in Morocco at one end of the Mediterranean, she might be ready to intervene in Egypt at the other.

The British Agent and Consul-General in Egypt, Sir Eldon Gorst, had been ill in England for many weeks, and it was known that his recovery was impossible; the need of a strong successor was urgent. The Government were a little nervous about the selection of a soldier, but while they hesitated Lord Cromer interposed his word. Some years before, when Kitchener was in India, his name was bruited to follow Cromer in Cairo. Lord Cromer strongly opposed the suggestion at the time; he thought—erroneously, as it turned out—that Sir Eldon Gorst would successfully carry forward his own traditions and carry out his own policy, and he still saw the former Sirdar as a great military organiser but ineligible as an administrator and diplomatist. But he had vigilantly and without prejudice marked Kitch-

extending north and south, the British east and west. The issue was decided in the Seven Years' War.

ener's later years in Calcutta; he had noted that his character had mellowed as his knowledge widened; he knew the man's true worth and Egypt's true want, and—a witness against his original belief—he now, as he had once before, irresistibly urged Kitchener's claim to high office.

On June 20 Sir Edward Grey wrote:

The King approves very cordially of your going to Cairo, and the arrangement is one which has evidently given him much pleasure, so that it may now be regarded as settled.

I find we must get an exequatur from the Turks before any formal appointment is made.

I should like the formal announcement and appointment to be dependent, to some extent, upon the news of Gorst's health; but, as the question is now practically settled, there is no reason your friends should not know.[1]

1 Sir Edward Grey, in making the announcement to the House of Commons, said: "It does not mean a change of policy from civil and administrative reform to military policy. It is not a reactionary policy. Lord Kitchener goes to continue our work in Egypt and to promote progress as far and as fast as it is reasonable and practicable to do it."

CHAPTER LXXXVI

KITCHENER's exequatur was duly granted by Turkey, and in September he embarked at the Docks for Alexandria with a servant and two dogs, having as usual given the slip to any adepts at the art of "seeing off." The only farewell which he would not evade was that of a party of North London Boy Scouts, who had camped during the summer in his grounds at Broome Park.[1] A detachment of these made their way to Liverpool Street Station and begged for a word from him. Alighting from the train, in which he had already taken his seat, Kitchener spoke to them:

Now, boys, it is very good of you to come to see me off to Egypt, and I am very glad to see you. I hope you will all work hard and keep the Scout law while I am away. When I come back I hope to see you again at my home at Broome Park, and I trust you will be able to have some more sport with the rabbits there. Once again, I am glad to see you all.

1 Since his return from East Africa he had taken considerable interest in the recently-established Boy Scout movement, to which his notice had been drawn by Sir Julian Byng. One of his rather rare speeches had been made on July 18 to the Scouts at Leicester: "'Once a Scout, always a Scout.' You will find the Scout law and Scout training very useful throughout life; so never allow Scouting to be looked upon as a game that is over. Keep it going as long as you are alive. As boy and as man help by all the means that lie in your power, and when we have a million men and boys—as I hope we shall have—imbued with the spirit of the Scouts, our nation may well be proud of its manhood."

His arrival was more eventful than his departure, for, on the very day he landed at Alexandria, Italy was presenting an ultimatum to Turkey, and announcing her purpose to occupy Tripoli. Turkey's soft answer failed to turn away wrath, and Italy declared war forthwith.

Strict neutrality was prescribed by England for Egypt, no less than for herself; but anxiety was felt as to a possible manifestation of popular feeling among the Egyptians during a conflict between a Christian Power and a potentate who was at once their Caliph and their Suzerain. The people took it, however, very quietly. No strong Nationalist party was raging; the Ministers as sensible men saw clearly on which side Egyptian bread was buttered, and though the Khedive may have gleefully anticipated golden opportunities for intrigue, he was at first on his best behaviour. Some excitement, fostered by certain newspapers, hardly survived a sharp rap over the knuckles administered to those organs of disaffection; and even the question of interning a shipload of sick Turkish soldiers passing through the Suez Canal on their way back to Yemen caused no demonstration.[1] In Alexandria the beginnings of a riot brought on by some armed Italians and Greeks were quickly quelled by the police, and though there was a small amount of illicit and secret traffic over the Egypt-Tripoli desert boundary, the populace remained tranquil. A few hot-headed Moslems naturally desired to help their co-religionists across the western border, but the Turk has never been beloved in Egypt, and there was no rush to back him.

Moreover, the British Agent had a quiet way of

1 They were allowed, after quarantine, to pass.

quenching inconvenient military ardour. Early in the war, a respectable Moslem deputation waited on the British Agent to suggest the despatch of a few Egyptian battalions to help the Turks: "That is quite a good idea, only as I could not improvise fresh Egyptian troops I might have to ask for some English battalions to come here." The bland reply had effect and the audience melted silently away.

On another occasion several Egyptian officers asked leave to volunteer for the Turkish Army. "By all means; only I should warn you that, as the establishment of officers must be kept up to strength, your places will necessarily be filled by promotions from the junior ranks, so that when you return you will find yourselves automatically on the retired list."

Yet one more deputation—this time of Bedawin sheikhs—sought permission to raise desert levies for the Caliph's service. Kitchener complimented them effusively on their warlike spirit, but was sure it would be a thousand pities if Egypt were to lose the services of men of so fine a fighting quality; and he undertook that, on their return, they should come under the Law of Conscription from which they had been specially exempt. The matter was reconsidered and the request withdrawn.

The war ran through all three years of Kitchener's administration, and was rich in incidents which required delicate handling. Italy, who might well suspect Turkey of trying to communicate with Tripoli through Egypt, was a little shy of our assurance that Egypt's arms were folded. The main trouble was on the undefined western frontier, where questions of the ownership of Sollum, of Jaghbub, Siwa, and Kufra—of the exact point where Egypt's boundary

touched the sea—of gun-running—of the loyalty of the nomad tribes, and above all of the intentions of the Senussi—arose almost every day.

The eastern side also had its complications. If the Italian warships in the Red Sea bombarded the coasts of the Hejaz, and the Turks consequently removed the lights and beacons from that coast, how about the neutral through-Canal traffic? Or, when Italian ships fired fifty shells at the Turkish post at Rafa'ah, on the Palestine-Sinai boundary, and inadvertently hit the Egyptian post alongside;[1] and when they did the same thing at the opposite end of the boundary, killing three mules at Akaba—were such occurrences to constitute a *casus belli* between Italy and ourselves?

The treaty between Italy and Turkey, signed at Lausanne after a year of war, did little to relieve the tension. Six months earlier Kitchener had correctly anticipated that "peace between Italy and Turkey would not make any difference in Tripoli": not only did the local Arabs continue their sparring along the coast regions of Tripoli and Cyrenaica, but the Senussi and the tribes of the interior joined in and kept the game going till the great European conflagration was well alight.

In Egypt the new British Agent found many changes—some for the better, some far otherwise.[2] Side by side with enhanced material prosperity there had been unsatisfactory growths. In the early days

1 "Breaking one water-pot, value one shilling, for which," Kitchener solemnly wrote, "I am not prepared to claim compensation."

2 Foremost amongst the constructive measures by which Egyptian agriculture was nursed and reared into vigorous and fruitful life had been the building of the great Assuan Dam and the completion of the scheme of irrigation—as large and elaborate a system of water storage and distribution as was ever devised by wit of man.

of British occupation the European community had been limited in size. In Cairo the British colony of hard-working soldiers and civilians had formed a happy family under the kindly, if despotic, sway of "the Lord." With the improved condition of the country hotels had sprung up like mushrooms, and swarms of cosmopolitan financiers, attracted largely by the cotton boom of 1907, had descended upon the land, bent on exploiting it for their own benefit, and bringing with them the not unmixed blessings of an extraneous civilisation.

The scheme of Government remained outwardly the same, with its advisory General Assembly, Legislative Council, and Ministers. But a new spirit was being generated; there were the old Capitulations [1] still unabolished and inimical to healthy reform; there was the new Nationalism growing in influence and in capacity for mischief; there was need of a better judicature, of better sanitation, of better agriculture, of better schools, and—above and before all—of a better lot for the fellahin, the backbone and mainstay of the land. To give effectual help to the peasant was to come at once to grips with the law of debt.

The fellah combined with an amazing capacity for work a positive genius for getting himself inextricably into the clutches of the usurer. From dawn to dusk he was in his field digging, hoeing, irrigating, sowing, tending, gathering, and only asking to produce enough to make both ends meet; he had no ambition, no craving for wealth, no interest in politics. But his unremitting industry was punctuated with

1 The Capitulations were originally letters of privilege delivered by Sultans of Turkey to Europeans resident in Egypt. Cromer and Kitchener always hoped, looked, and worked for their abolition.

sporadic outbursts of extravagance. Temptation beset him in the form of local feasts, marriages, and other family occasions—the families vying with one another in spending more money than they could afford—and fitful and foolish expenditure, coupled with a delight in litigation, rendered the fellah an easy prey to the rapacious money-lender who infested the rural districts. Having mortgaged all his property at a scandalous rate of interest, his financial condition went from bad to worse, and the small proprietor would too often awake to find himself sold up and his family brought to beggary.

These harmless and hard-working agriculturists form more than four-fifths of the population of Egypt, and the industry which they bring to bear on its rich soil is the bedrock of its prosperity. It was in the interest, therefore, not of a class, but of a community, that Kitchener introduced the Five Feddan Law.

This law [it was stated] is based on a number of instances of similar legislation in other countries . . . such as the *bien de famille insaisissable* in France . . . and the Punjab Land Alienation Act in India. It gives protection to the small cultivator—of five feddans and under—against expropriation of his land, house, and farming utensils for debt. It does not prevent his selling his land, should he so desire, or raising money on his crops. The law is not retrospective as regards debts already incurred. The protection of the poorer fellah in this matter was rendered necessary by the action of the small foreign usurers who, scattered throughout the country in the villages and financed by various banks, were able, with the support of the Capitulations, to lend money on mortgage to the fellahin at exorbitant rates of interest—30 to 40 per cent and even higher being not unusual charges. Not even a country as agriculturally pros-

perous as Egypt can indefinitely stand such a burden, and unfortunately the inducements held out to the fellah to take the first step into debt were temptations few could resist—with the inevitable consequence that, once he was in the clutches of the money-lender, there was no escape for the victim until the whole of his property became so involved as to bring about his expropriation. . . . The fellah, though I hope learning, has not yet acquired, habits of thrift, and had, up to the establishment of Savings-banks in the villages, no secure place to keep his money. It will no doubt take a long time to change the habits of centuries. Meanwhile the security of the cultivator's tenure required safeguarding.[1]

A Draft of the Bill was submitted to various experts; its critics and opponents were many and not a little bitter, the comments of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce being conspicuously caustic. The money-lenders rose as one man in wrathful denunciation, and some highly respectable banks and financial magnates were moved to dismal predictions. The author of the Bill was warned that he would not only upset the internal credit system of the country, but would render the fellah's lot even less happy than before. Some of the lending banks were, of course, adversely affected, and large landowners objected that an increase of peasant proprietorship would reduce their rents. Kitchener willingly listened to any proposals for mitigating incidental hardships to lender or borrower, but was not to be moved from prosecuting his measure, and on June 14, 1912, the Legislative Council approved the Bill.

1 That security of tenure indeed required safeguarding was amply proved by the Report of a Commission in the following year, to the effect that no fewer than 619,107 properties of under five feddans were saddled with debt to the tune of nearly 16 million Egyptian pounds, giving an average indebtedness of nearly E£26 per feddan.

The financiers might have spared their forebodings; the new law took effect gradually and gratefully and—except for the harpies at whom it was aimed—innocuously. The fellahin were quick to appreciate it, and never sought to evade its clauses. A year later Kitchener could write: "You know how fond people are of petitioning on the very slightest grievance. The Prime Minister told me yesterday that there had not been a single petition from an owner of five feddans and under against the Five Feddan Law." (11.5.13.)

A contributory proof of its efficacy was to be found in the fact that Greeks in Mitylene and elsewhere, who had been accustomed to entrust their money to the usurers in Egypt and to draw high interest from the peasants, now had to find other, if less remunerative, investments. Kitchener's reform stood justified, and since his day the Five Feddan Law has brought contentment and prosperity into thousands of humble homes.[1]

Another early care was to facilitate and expedite the delivery of the peasants' goods to the markets of the large centres. Small quays were constructed at Cairo for landing produce, and while the so-called "royal" road to Heluan and that between Cairo and

1 The text of the law as finally promulgated on December 4, 1912, was as follows:

"The agricultural holdings of farmers who do not own more than 5 feddans cannot be seized for debt. This exemption from seizure includes the dwelling-house of such farmers and their dependencies, as well as two draught animals and the agricultural implements necessary for the cultivation of such land. Such exemption applies to the claims of mortgage-creditors and those who are secured by a pledge or a *droit d'affectation hypothécaire,* but not to privileged creditors.

"The above provisions shall not affect the rights of creditors whose security is registered at the time of coming into force of this law, nor those of unsecured creditors whose document of title has obtained an official date before that time."

Alexandria were being laid out, Kitchener had small roadways made in the country, which enabled vehicles to be substituted for donkeys, and thus considerably increased the carrying power of the tillers of the land.

CHAPTER LXXXVII

Having helped to set the agriculturist class on their feet, the British Agent sought to stimulate agriculture, and especially to improve the quality and quantity of the cotton crop. He had always a penchant for tropical cultivation; he bought land for himself in East Africa, and about 1893 invested some of his slender savings as Sirdar in an island near Assuan, where he was wont to devote his little leisure to experimental farming.

His present position gave him a fine opportunity, of which he quickly availed himself, to explore and expand the resources of one of the richest agricultural countries in the world. His practical knowledge saved him from being beguiled into approval of fanciful and self-interested proposals often put forward by men of straw. He would lend a willing ear to any honest suggestion, but would sanction no sort of scheme, however scientific, without close personal scrutiny.[1]

1 Just before the outbreak of the war Kitchener, as Vice-President of the International Congress of Tropical Agriculture, presided at the Imperial Institute over a meeting convened to discuss cotton cultivation, particularly in Egypt. He had announced beforehand that he would not have much to say, and the assemblage—which included foreign delegates from all parts—was agreeably surprised by his arrival with a large map and a number of diagrams, and by his spontaneous delivery of a lecture on the means taken to reclaim waste salt land at Biala. He made the point that this was an object-lesson to the Egyptian cultivator, who was best converted by ocular demonstration.

Nearly one-third of the agricultural soil of Egypt is under cotton, the quality of which is unrivalled. In our Lancashire spinning-mills its length of staple has rendered it the standard cotton, by comparison with which the best American varieties are classed as substitutes.

A crop which bears an average annual value of over thirty-two millions sterling is a first-class national asset, and it is a matter of financial concern to the State to insure that its cultivation be carried out on the most approved scientific principles, with a view to extracting full value from the soil, and for giving full protection to the crop. The ground has to be selected and prepared; it must contain no salt; it needs to be kept moist enough to nourish, but not wet enough to rot, the growing plant. The seed must be good in quality, and all of one sort, and according to sample. The plants need to be spaced at proper intervals, without crowding, and a watch kept against various diseases and several kinds of insect pest. In fine, the toil of the peasant grower, the heir of immemorial rough and ready methods, must be subjected to scientific supervision.

In 1907 the price of cotton had so varied as to cause a sensational "boom" followed by a sensational "slump," in which fortunes had been made and lost. Kitchener believed that such unhealthy fluctations in prices might generally be prevented if the cultivation of cotton were brought under authoritative direction.[1]

Over the rather thin ice of State interference it was advisable to walk warily. The multifarious in-

1 He always insisted on seeing fortnightly a tabular statement showing particulars of each field of cotton planted.

terests at stake rendered it liable, if too drastic, to defeat its own ends, and to arouse resistance—passive from the fellahin, overt from the financiers, covert from the cotton operators. As a first step, not only cotton-growing but all agriculture must come under the paternal care of Government. Such protection was long overdue. Seeing that the whole economic reservation of Egypt was dependent on this one industry, it was strange that the State had always left it severely alone until Sir Eldon Gorst in 1910 started a small Department of Agriculture within the Ministry of Public Works. This new office absorbed the expert staff of the long-established Agricultural Society, a non-official body which under Prince Kamil Hussein—later Sultan of Egypt, 1914 to 1918—had done much good work, though it lacked the authority necessary to enforce reform.

Kitchener would not raise the status of the Department until he had probed its organisation; its usefulness should be certified before its powers were enlarged. One of its principal duties was to explain and exploit official decrees and to bring them to the peasant's door. Let villages be flooded with circulars couched in the simplest language and treating of processes of cultivation, precautions against and destruction of insect pests, economical and effective methods of applying irrigation, the preservation of beneficent bird life and the like—such leaflets to be read out to his neighbours by the Headman of each village after the Friday prayers in the local mosque. Conversations on such matters were to be encouraged, instructors were to be despatched to district centres, and advanced classes in agricultural lore formed in the large towns.

The chief hindrance to progress was the curious apathy of the peasantry—the persons primarily concerned. Reason makes slow headway against custom, and in Egypt the system of cultivation, like most Egyptian industrial methods, differed little from that directed by the Pharaohs. Even a peril like that of 1911, when more than half of the cotton area was invaded by the cotton and boll worms, failed to stir the native cultivators. They piously regarded the evil as a visitation of Allah, sat still and murmured monotonously "Allah kerim." The more materialist among them, to whom it dimly occurred that Allah might work through human instruments, could only suggest the firing of maroons to frighten away the caterpillars.[1]

It was late in 1913 before the Department of Agriculture burgeoned into an independent Ministry, which succeeded to the accumulated wisdom and experience of its forerunner, and enjoyed an authority and resources such as the older body had never known. At its head was an Egyptian Minister with an English Assistant to supply motive power.

The British Agent was all-concerned to extend the cotton area, but not at the expense of the wheat and millet harvests. The country was growing 95 per cent of its own food, and cotton must not interfere with daily bread.[2] And, as he reminded those who clamoured for "more cotton," there was an unlimited area waiting for them in the Sudan, between the White and the Blue Niles immediately to the south of Khartum—the region known as the Gezira, where

1 An official circular revised by Kitchener, who entitled it the *Reconnaissance before the Battle,* was issued to instruct cultivators as to the prevention of the cotton worm.

2 Intermittent cotton-growing was possible in his reclaimed salt areas, provided it were alternated with "land-washing" crops of rice.

vast tracts of the true black cotton soil lacked nothing but irrigation to render it abundantly fruitful. For nearly a dozen years Sudan cotton had been recognised as of the finest quality; nothing but want of funds, of properly distributed water, and of labour, had prevented the development of the Gezira on the lines of several satisfactory experiments already made.

In the Sudan seventeen years earlier Kitchener had fully weighed the possibilities of cotton when the country was as yet unsuitable for its production on a large scale. Now, however, Wingate urged, and Lancashire shouted for, the development of the Gezira and other cotton areas—at Tokar and on the Gash; and the British Agent, believing that largely increased supplies of cotton would become a British requirement, appealed to London for a loan to be devoted in nearly equal parts to irrigation and other preparatory processes, and railway extension. Three millions was the final figure of the loan—a compromise between the sum of five millions first thought of and the single million which it was contemplated that the British Exchequer should be asked to advance. In the financial world the Sudanese Loan, guaranteed by the British Government, had many powerful friends, but it was not till the March of 1913 that it received the sanction of Parliament. Its double effect was, as Kitchener had foreseen, to stir up the industry of the country and to strengthen the foundations of a commercial future, largely grounded on cotton.[1]

[1] The final decision at the beginning of 1914 as to the allocation of the money was: cotton-planting and irrigation in the Gezira, £2,000,000; ditto at Tokar and Kassala, each £100,000; railway extension, £800,000. The details of the scheme, drawn up under Kitchener's personal supervision, included (1) the construction of a barrage on the Blue Nile capable of

Egypt's enjoyment of a plentiful oil supply of her own is in no small degree due to Kitchener's intervention at a critical moment. The early search for productive oil-fields was disappointing; the first experimental borings brought little encouragement, and a second and more expensive venture to discover oil in paying quantities and to construct a refinery at Suez only suggested that the work might have to be stopped and the field abandoned. The one hope was that the Egyptian Government could be persuaded to be sympathetic—in particular, that it would consent to extend the areas where boring was permitted and to broaden the conditions of the licence granted to the promoters. The enterprise was hanging on a thread when Kitchener decided that the Government must befriend a project which presented such rich possibilities, and which even in his time produced rich results.

supplying water to irrigate 3,000,000 acres, and (2) the construction of a preliminary main canal and of subsidiary canals to irrigate 300,000 acres, of which 100,000 acres would be under cotton. It was estimated that the work could be completed in four years.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII

The British Agent was as much concerned with the health as with the wealth of Egypt and took infinite pains to brighten the conditions of life for the fellahin. He insisted on better housing and modern sanitation; he designed model villages and gardens; he provided open spaces, and even put out some of the ancient monuments where they could be seen and enjoyed by the masses.

He was confronted early in the day by startling statistics of infant mortality, which could often be traced to quite preventable accidents at birth, improper feeding, and unwholesome neglect. Arrangements were therefore at once made for giving simple and salutary instruction to mothers and midwives in their responsible duties; and, as the local doctors were few and inaccessible, the local barbers were put in training to render qualified first aid until the medical practitioner could be summoned. By setting up clinics at dispensing centres it was hoped to deal with ordinary ailments and bring the people into touch with medical aid, and the fresh attention which Kitchener insisted on being given unstintingly to the admirably equipped Eye Hospitals was calculated to stem the ravages of ophthalmia and eye disease. No visitor to Egypt comes away without an ugly reminiscence of the semi-blind men and women, and

of children with eyes running with sores and encrusted with filthy flies, which they neither tried nor were told to brush away. Kitchener had a fellow-feeling for these victims, as his own eyes had suffered from undue exposure to the sun,[1] and he believed that a real, if partial, remedy was to be found for ophthalmia as for other diseases if greater care were bestowed on children of tender age.

He would keep himself closely informed of the condition of women and children, not only by personal inspection, but by asking his friends to pay surprise visits to dispensaries and other medical centres. In the early part of 1913 a lady was writing home: "These dispensaries are very widely used now by the natives, and when I visited one at Assiut I found that hundreds of women and children were receiving attention. The nurses told me that when Lord Kitchener visited them he went into every detail and evinced the keenest interest."

Nor were his sanitary efforts confined to women and children. He made important changes in the Public Health Department, and devoted especial attention to endemic diseases largely contracted through germs entering the bodies of the natives when bathing or paddling in stagnant pools.

The Department of Health found it uphill work to fight the incredible apathy and ignorance of the natives. "It is easy," Kitchener wrote, "to chronicle the insanitary conditions of the villages of Egypt; but not so easy to point out practical remedies." His first remedies took the form of elementary hygienic education, village sanitary inspec-

1 Just after Omdurman Queen Victoria wrote to him: "The Queen is sorry to hear that the Sirdar is suffering from his eyes, but she trusts he has nearly recovered by this time."

tion, and the filling up of the *birkas* (stagnant pools); but some time elapsed before these innovations were approved by the Egyptian fellah or townsman, to whom sanitary measures were works of supererogation.

Second perhaps to the Capitulations as a source of confusion in the government of Egypt was the system of phantom "free institutions" founded after the Arabi Rebellion of 1882. The setting-up of the Legislative Council and the General Assembly was a sop thrown to political doctrinaires at home, who imagined that an Oriental people ruled throughout their age-long history by the strong hand of a master could now be safely granted, if not a liberal constitution, at least something which contained "the germs of constitutional freedom." [1]

Both Council and Assembly suffered in their composition by defective principles of selection and election respectively. The Council was supposed to exist as a very select body of men always ready to assist the Government with criticism, suggestion, and counsel. In reality, urged by agitators and extremists, it had tried to exceed its functions and to interfere in important questions lying outside the scope of its responsibility. Similarly, the General Assembly, doubtless inspired by the best intentions, proved a hindrance rather than a help, partly by obstructiveness, partly by agitation in favour of ill-timed crudely-planned measures of supposed "reform."

1 Representative consultative bodies were no new thing in Egypt. Apart from lesser councils of sheikhs, local commissions, town councils, mixed municipalities, councils of agriculture, and others, there were the provincial councils which were doing very good work, but none of these had representative powers.

Kitchener thought that one serviceable body would be more satisfactory than two of doubtful quality, and at his instigation the existing procedure was to be liberally reformed. A law of July 1913 secured for the new single Chamber—the "Legislative Assembly"—a direct, instead of an indirect, popular representation. Yet, while the genuine voice of the people could now be heard in the counsels offered to Government, there was neither the purpose nor the pretence to confer on them legislative control.

As regards any real representation of the Egyptian people [wrote Cromer to Kitchener about this time], which could ultimately in some degree take the place of personal Government, probably the wisest thing for the moment is to leave the whole question alone. . . . National representation in Egypt in the sense in which the term is generally used is a sheer absurdity, for the very natural and sufficient reason that the Egyptians are not a nation and, so far as can now be foreseen, are not likely to be a nation, at all events during the lifetime of any person now living. They are a fortuitous conglomeration of a number of miscellaneous and hybrid elements.

The first Session, which closed in June 1914, was not an unqualified success, and time was required for the new Assembly to adapt itself to its new duties and become a valuable ancillary to the Government. But before the Chamber could re-assemble the outbreak of the Great War had an immediate effect on Egyptian affairs, and later on the administration of the country was to be very roughly shaken. It was then freely said that the sense of injustice which stung Egypt sorely when the Hejaz were raised to the dignity of a kingdom, and autonomy was prom-

ised to Mesopotamia and Syria, would never have so rankled if the man who was saturated with sympathy for the country had still been in the country or even alive to represent the workings of her mind.

Intimately associated with any legislative reform of the British Agent was the double duty of sustaining, or rather of reviving, the full dignity of his official status and of keeping a light but tight hand on the restive Khedive. Kitchener's advent raised the question of his rank with regard to the other Consuls-General, of whom he was as a matter of fact the junior.

A dilemma was likely to occur at the first Khedivial levée. How could the man who represented the supreme authority in the land yield the *pas* to the Chef de Mission of a quite minor Power? On the other hand, could he openly flout the established table of precedence? There was much chatter and some heart-burning as to what would happen. But when the day came, the Representatives of the Powers arrived at the Palace only to find that the British Agent had—owing to pressing business in the afternoon—already sought and secured a special audience of the Khedive in the morning.

Long experience had taught Kitchener that a certain amount of pomp was no bad conducive to popularity with the natives. Sir Eldon Gorst, with the amiable intention of showing himself in sympathy with popular feeling, had, by an exaggerated simplicity of life, tended to lower the prestige of the Agency. His successor revived the gorgeous running syces in front of the carriage; he clothed his cavasses in the traditional gold-decked Turkish cos-

tume. He was always well mounted, and he and his staff paid particular attention to the whole turn-out; he entertained lavishly, and even coaxed His Majesty's Office of Works into adding a ballroom to the Agency, which was equally available for his own entertainments or for meetings to promote a good cause. On the return of the King and Queen from India,[1] early in 1913, he arranged for a royal landing at Port Sudan, where the Sovereign was acclaimed by the sheikhs summoned from all parts of the Sudan to do him honour. And Kitchener's knowledge of Arabic and acquaintance with individual Arabs gave him a facility for intercourse denied to Lord Cromer. In his office, and more often in his garden, he would welcome sheikhs and peasant proprietors, whose names and circumstances were usually familiar to him; to their grievances and aspirations he would sympathetically listen, and they would go away satisfied that their case and cause would not be neglected.

After the departure of the King and Queen the British Agent proceeded to Khartum and thence travelled to El Obeid on the new railway which, starting from Khartum up the Blue Nile, branched off across the Gezira, crossed the White Nile and brought the capital of Kordofan into direct contact with civilisation. Here again he thoroughly probed the cotton question and visited the experimental farm at Taiyiba, his inspection there hardening his resolution to demand a loan for the Sudan in considerable excess of the million at one time contemplated. With Wingate he was also able to discuss all

1 For the passage of the King and Queen through the Red Sea the Turks, with commendable courtesy, had relit their lights and replaced their beacons.

the conditions of the Sudan, the settlement with the French of the Dar Tama—Dar Masalit question on the Darfur—Wadai frontier, and the Sudan Uganda boundary.

Active reformers, however benevolent, must never be surprised to find themselves the objects of contumely and reproach. Kitchener's procedure was not exempt from acrid criticism nor his person from attempted assassination. A network of designs against him was discovered by the police, who, however, had difficulty in inducing him to take any sort of precautions for his safety until, in July 1912, an attempt to shoot him at Cairo Railway Station by a well-known seditionist, one Taher Arabi, was only frustrated by the cool courage of his devoted friend, Major FitzGerald, who was acting as Military Attaché. Fourteen months later another plot was hatched in Egypt against Kitchener's life, intended to be put into effect at Venice on his return from leave in England. News of this design reached the Foreign Office, and messages were sent in all directions to warn him of his danger; as usual, he had told no one of his precise movements, but by good luck the Vice-Consul at Leghorn ran him to earth at a villa near Pisa where he was studying garden ornaments for the benefit of his own English home. Nothing, however, could induce him to forgo his annual visit to his old friend, Lady Layard, at Venice, and the Italian police congratulated themselves heartily when the British traveller had left their shores.

In one important respect Kitchener may well have been the object of Cromer's envy. The agreement

of 1904 under which we had conceded to France a free hand in Morocco with reciprocity in Egypt had given an almost fraternal character to our relations with our Ally. Instead of the sharp corners which had formerly to be turned the British and French Consuls-General could now tread an easy path, undisturbed either by the negotiations regarding the Darfur-Wadai frontiers, or by the questions constantly springing from the Capitulations and Mixed Tribunals, whose natural death both alike ardently desired.

CHAPTER LXXXIX

In May 1912 Kitchener was summoned to attend an "informal" conference at Malta, when the subject on the *tapis* was the naval control of the Mediterranean. The proposal was afoot to leave the Southern Sea to the care of the French, and to dedicate the British Navy to the North Sea, where the increase of the German Fleet portended danger. Kitchener, delighted to be the guest of the Governor, Sir Leslie Rundle, met in conclave the Prime Minister and the First Lord of the Admiralty and other officials. An energetic discussion lasted for some days and some surprise was expressed at the soldier's knowledge of naval facts and figures. Kitchener quietly informed Mr. Churchill and Prince Louis of Battenberg that they could supply the force he deemed necessary for the Mediterranean without any reduction of what they required for the North Sea.[1] Egypt was, of course, foremost in Kitchener's mind when the policing of the Mediterranean was at issue, and he could not favour any diversion of our Fleet unless weighty conditions were attached. The contemplated action, he also urged, would have the undesirable effect of causing Egypt to look to India instead of to England

1 Reference home by telegram proved Kitchener's figures to be correct. "It seems to me," the Prime Minister remarked, "that Lord Kitchener is giving them the information we expected them to give us."

for supplies no less than for reinforcements. An immediate danger of war with Germany must of course entail concentration of every available ship in British waters; but, short of such a contingency, an exodus of our ships from the Mediterranean would be a grave disadvantage to the country which, with its far-reaching interests, he represented at the Conference. The eventual decision was in favour of a very small number of powerful ships in the Mediterranean, a battle squadron based on Gibraltar, defences against submarines, and a fort, with six big guns, to be built at Alexandria, together with some troops for defending the wireless station there. Objections were raised later, in some quarters of Egypt, to the building of the fort and to the institution of a naval torpedo station near by; but the naval programme, though it could not be carried immediately to completion, was well-timed to meet troubles already brewing in the near East, for within a few months of the Malta Conference war broke out in the Balkans.

With her suzerain Power again in arms, Egypt was again in no easy place, and it was even suggested that to quiet any turbulent Moslem spirits she might, without discarding her neutrality, break off relations with the Allied Balkan States. The Foreign Office, however, insisted on unqualified neutrality, and was much gratified by Kitchener's assurances that even if Turkey directly invited Egypt to declare herself no sort of response would be made. Egypt in fact displayed no emotion; she was not nearly so much affected as she had been by the Tripoli campaign; she bethought herself that the Balkans were a long way off, and she remembered that Allah was great.

Germany, her eye fixed on the Middle East and her hand ready to strike at the British Empire, had not been idle in Egypt. Her influence and interests in the country had steadily grown and, while her commerce was the pretext for strengthening her foothold, she was secretly striving to suborn the natives [1] so that they might be her pawns when she set out her chess-board. But somehow she failed to ingratiate herself. She neither understood nor was understood by the Egyptian people, and although she prospered in business she made but little headway in popularity. Kitchener had an early encounter with his colleague, Prince Hatzfeldt, for whom personally he entertained some regard. Vacancies had occurred in the Khedivial Library and the Museum of Antiques, both of which the representative of Germany endeavoured to secure for his countrymen, although he was only entitled to one. The German ambassador in London made plaint that only two Germans were allowed to fill official appointments in Egypt, but was nonplussed by a list of twenty-three Teutonic tenants of office which Kitchener had sent home. It further transpired that the German Librarian-elect was one Dr. Prüfer, who had been more than friendly with the Egyptian Nationalist party, and whose candidature could scarcely therefore be entertained. "I told the German *Chargé d'Affaires,*" Kitchener wrote, "that though, according to agreement, the Egyptian Government would appoint a German to the post, this did not constitute the appointment as

1 A Swiss resident in Cairo just then published a book of poems in German as an antidote to the German propaganda. The volume was dedicated to Kitchener, who in his acknowledgment expressed "the hope that all those connected with Egypt will work for the prosperity of the country and her inhabitants." It included an acrostic of which the first letters of each stanza formed Kitchener's name.

one to be made by the German Government; and although we are very glad of any assistance in finding the right man for it, when he declared, as he did, that Dr. Prüfer was the only German in all Germany qualified for the post, I could not help mentioning that I thought it would be possible for the Egyptian Government to find unaided a suitable German elsewhere.'' Germany was, however, able to render signal disservice to Great Britain and France by clinging, and inducing her Allies of the Triple Alliance to cling, to the Mixed Tribunals—a system of judicature the irritating defects of which were abundantly admitted, but which could not be terminated without the assent of all fourteen Powers concerned. She found further scope for her energies in connivance at gun-running on the Tripolitan coast, in proffering arms and munitions to the Senussi, and in bidding-up for the Mariut Railway.

This line had been run by the Khedive ostensibly to develop his agricultural properties west of Alexandria. It had been benevolently regarded by the Government as a toy likely to keep His Highness out of mischief, and he had even been treated to some second-hand railway material and sleepers, and an occasional gang of convicts, to help him in the construction. In 1912 stories were current to the effect that both railway and employees were being utilised for purposes alien to agriculture, and there was the damning fact that the line had been carried to a length of 144 miles—far to the west of its promoter's millet-fields. Later there were persistent reports of intrigues and clandestine negotiations—even before the Italian war—with Turkish, Senussi, Arab, and other authorities; but, as the rumours

could not be substantiated, there was no ground for any serious protest.

Early in 1913, however—three months after peace was signed between the Turks and the Italians, and whilst fighting was still going on in Tripoli, Cyrenaica, and the Balkans—the Egyptian Government was startled to hear that the Khedive had not only sold the railway, but had sold it to a German bank. The latter part of the statement proved to be inaccurate; the Dresdner Bank had found a rival bidder in an Italian syndicate, and the Khedive, after some hesitation, signed a paper in favour of the Italians, giving them an option on the railway, with power to extend it to the Tripolitan frontier at Sollum.

Kitchener at once repaired to the Palace, and with due deference informed the Khedive that by signing the paper he had seriously compromised himself; he had disposed of property which did not belong to him, and for this he would be held responsible by the Government of Egypt, who owned the land over which the line passed. Frightened by the prospect of exposure,[1] though still in desperate need of the cash, the Khedive promised to get the paper cancelled, but was quite hurt when Kitchener refused to listen to his proposal that the Government should buy the railway. Ten days were spent in frantic endeavours to recover the paper; the head of the syndicate, seeing the dust that was being raised, handsomely returned the document; a naïve explanation that the purchase was to prevent the Khedive

1 "My serious message," Kitchener wrote, "had an excellent effect. At first he received it with considerable nonchalance, but subsequent discussions with his Ministers have made him see that his position was really in danger. Many natives have expressed to me their satisfaction that the Khedive was not allowed to sell the railway to the Italians."

from intriguing with Senussi against Italy was proffered and accepted; the arch-culprit bowed to a severe scolding and betook himself to other sources for raising the wind. His financial difficulties stimulated rather than restrained his political activities, which assumed their darker character after his long visit to Constantinople in 1913. He took impish delight in trying to create friction between his own subjects and the British, and he would vent his spleen in intrigues against his own Government, showing pointed and petulant rudeness to members of it whom he specially disfavoured.

I let it be quietly known [Kitchener wrote at the end of 1912] that in case of a change of Government, we might think of the Party of the People. They are chiefly landed proprietors and not friends of the Khedive. If he understands they may form a Ministry, we may hear little more about a new Cabinet. We should not desert the Prime Minister.

The Khedive's speculations, in which he deeply dipped himself in efforts to restore his shattered fortune, were as unhappy as they were unprofitable. Nor were they unvaried with positive peculation. Corresponding more or less to Church property in Great Britain, there are in Egypt large possessions enjoyed by different mosques, religious foundations and trusts. These endowments consist of lands and funds of many descriptions, and, being constantly enriched by the bequests of devout Moslems, are of very considerable value. When the finances of Egypt were taken in hand by Europeans after Ismail's disastrous reign, these properties or Wakfs,[1] being of a religious character, were exempt,

1 More correctly, Aukaf.

and their administration remained in religious Mohammedan hands. At one time they were administered by a responsible Minister with the assistance of a selected Board; but the system fell into disuse, and administration by no one in particular was resulting in misapplications, malversations, and even misappropriations of funds, when the Khedive stepped in and, perceiving an excellent way of reimbursing himself for some of his losses, assumed control. At first his administration was marked with a sanctimonious show of rectitude, but stories were soon told which suggested that his stewardship might become a public scandal. Both Lord Cromer and Sir Eldon Gorst had expressed grave displeasure, but had not liked to interfere with funds of a purely religious character. Now, however, that the Mohammedan community itself was becoming seriously disturbed on the subject, and that it was becoming more and more evident that large sums were being diverted not only to the Khedive's own private account but to the dissemination of anti-British propaganda, Kitchener put his foot down.

With the willing help of the Egyptian Ministers an inquiry was set on foot, which revealed that the accounts had been allowed to drift into a chaotic state, and that large sums had been paid to the credit both of the Khedive himself and of doubtful Palace officials who offered no explanation of their disposal. It was calculated that the Khedive was drawing £80,000 annually from the Wakfs, and nearly half that sum from the sale of decorations. Although a decree had been issued by his father regulating the arrangements for the bestowal of decorations, Abbas Hilmi had paid little or no attention to it, and had

recouped himself for many of his speculative losses by selling Medjidiehs and Osmaniehs for large sums to people who had done little to deserve them.

Kitchener's protest against this double traffic was met at first by a scornful denial; the Khedive hinted that the Agency must have been misinformed by evil-minded and designing persons, but the list of deeds which the Agent had in his pocket was too long and too clearly made out to admit of disproof. The Khedive shifted his ground, acknowledged his error, and, with a beaming smile, again proposed the purchase by the Government of the Mariut Railway as the condition of his better behaviour. The condition was not rejected, but two days later His Highness went back on his promises, and announced his intention of retaining in his own hands the administration of the Wakfs. This set a term to the patience of the Government, and a hint was conveyed to the Palace that the Turkish Grand Vizier would raise no objection if the British Government saw fit to remove the Khedive from his high office. The threat brought him at last to his senses, and after a certain amount of equivocation he gave in. The Wakfs were therefore removed from his control and placed under a respectable Moslem Minister and Council. His distribution of decorations was guarded from further scandal, and a close watch was kept on His Highness's relations with the Turks and Nationalists. On the other hand, the Government, making the conditions depend largely on Abbas's future good behaviour, agreed to purchase the railway.

This episode, which occurred in November 1913, somewhat cleared the air, and the Khedive appeared anxious to propitiate the Agency, but his agile mind

was still alert to raise money for himself and trouble for us. Before many weeks were over he was discovered to be in close and secret correspondence with the Senussi chieftains, endeavouring to negotiate peace between the Tripolitan Arabs and the Italians in return for a very large sum in cash.

This was a scheme more praiseworthy than practicable, and it was doomed to failure. The several missions were clumsily handled, and the emissaries returned empty-handed and in sore disgrace. When the Khedive's representative informed El Said Idris, the cousin of the Grand Sheikh Ahmed-es-Senussi, that if he would work for peace with the Italians, the Khedive would support him and ensure his supplanting his cousin as head of all the Senussiya, Idris flew into a passion and broke off all further discussion.

Closely interwoven with the Senussi negotiations was an ugly little chain of intrigue in which was involved the Egyptian representative of a European bank of pronounced political complexion; to give this nefarious scheme its quietus was Kitchener's last action before leaving Cairo in June 1914.

The remark is attributed to King Edward VII. that the test of a good administrator lies in his capacity for keeping things quiet. Judged by this standard, the *de facto* ruler of Egypt took high honours in the school of statesmanship. His presence served to keep that peace which meant so much for the prosperity of the country, and although he knew trouble was lurking not far below the surface, he could hope that by a long course of wise and just administration, by steady elimination of grievances

and alleviation of burdens, and by a liberal and sustained support of native industry, disaffection would die down and sedition at last find nothing to feed upon. Time was needed, and during his time, at any rate, Kitchener was able and, as it would seem, easily able, to obviate any expression of anti-British feeling. And this sustained tranquillity was the greater proof of his influence because circumstances, external and internal, combined to favour the forces of disorder. The two distracting wars in which Turkey was engaged, the perpetual straining at the leash on the part of politicians who panted to become legislators, and the ceaseless malfeasances of the Khedive, were superadded to the ordinary complex cares of administration. Over and above the responsibility of damping down these inflammable materials was the duty of devising and carrying out a bevy of constructive measures of legislation. Agriculture, sanitation, education, and judicature suggest rather than complete the chapter of subjects dealt with in the course of an Administration to which Kitchener had always looked forward as a prize which might fall to him. Cotton-markets and savings-banks, school buildings and Press supervision, the increase of cattle at home and the control of native students abroad, the overhauling of cantonal justice and the heightening of the Assuan Dam, correspondence alike with the Coptic Archbishop of Sinai and the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem,[1] were each and all of

1 In 1913 Bishop Gwynne was installed at Khartum as Suffragan to the Bishop in Jerusalem. This appointment had been for many years in Kitchener's mind. "I must thank you at once," he wrote to Bishop Blyth early in 1913, "for your letter on the subject of Church affairs in general and of the Bishopric question in particular. It is very good of you to have taken the trouble to have set the facts before me so clearly and fully, and I shall take careful note of your observations. I shall be very happy to see

absorbing interest to him, and received equally assiduous attention. "Let me say," wrote Lord Cromer, "how thoroughly sound I think all your Egyptian views are. May you go on and prosper. It is a real consolation to me to think that, under your auspices, the work of my lifetime will not be thrown away; until your advent I confess that I began to fear that such would be the case." Cromer's great service in Egypt had been rewarded by an Earldom while he was still at the Agency, and the Prime Minister advised the King that no lesser title should adorn his successor during his tenure of the office. The Birthday *Gazette* of June 1914 announced that the Sovereign had been pleased to confer on Viscount Kitchener the honour of an Earldom, and the telegram announcing his new dignity reached him just as he was starting for England on his annual leave. How little did he think that he would see no more the land he knew and the people he loved, and had cared for, so well.

Archdeacon Potter whenever he arrives, and I am sure a talk with him will be most useful."

Kitchener during the war kept up a correspondence with the Archbishop of Sinai, and in the New Year of 1916 was telegraphing: "Je prie Votre Béatitude de croire que je suis particulièrement touché de votre télégramme. . . . Je souhaite que la nouvelle année vous apporte le bonheur, et la sante nécessaire à la continuation de votre belle œuvre."

END OF VOL. II

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